A REVIEW OF THE Biſhop of *BANGOR*'s ANSWER TO THE REPRESENTATION

Drawn up by the Committee Of the LOWER-HOUSE of *Convocation.*

In Two PARTS.

By *M. EARBERY*, Vicar of *Neatſhead*, in NORFOLK.

PART II.

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REVIEW

OF THE

Bishop of LINCOLN'S

ANSWER

TO THE

REPRESENTATION

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THE PREFACE.

IT is a uſual Cuſtom of moſt Writers in their Preface, to deſire their Readers, to read their Works without Prejudice, which Requeſt is ſeldom granted by the Reader, unleſs the Author takes the Pains to remove the Prejudices himſelf, for it is a kind of dirty Work, which others will not perform for him.

In the firſt Place therefore, I deſire the Reader not to think, I ever was the Author of any other Book, than the Firſt and Second Part of this Treatiſe

Treatiſe, which is now before him, except an Anſwer to Spinoſa, *Printed in the Year* 1693, *or* 1694. *And this I ſpeak to prevent any Miſtake which may ariſe from an Identity of Names.*

In the Second Place, I would beg of him to have the Charity to believe, that, tho' I am in one of the Loweſt Stations *of the* Church, *I do not write for* Bread, *for if I did it with that* Low Deſign, *I would write for* that Party *of* Men, *who have* moſt Bread *to give. My real Deſign, is the Manifeſtation of* Truth, *whether the* Age *is willing to receive it, or no; for if* this *will not, perhaps* another *may: And I ſhould be glad to do any good to the World, as well when I am dead, as whilſt I am living, for aged Men muſt not preſume of living long, but the Benefit of good Principles will live for ever.*

In the third Place, I would not be blamed by the Reader, for the preſumption of writing againſt a Perſon of a Superior Order, *as if I was ambitious of moving out of my* little Orb, *to meddle with Matters too high for me. If I had began the Attack, tho' I could have pleaded his* Lordſhip's *Preſident in his Treatment of the late worthy* Biſhop *of* Exeter, *I ſhould not have thought it a ſufficient Vindication; But ſince a* Fire *has been kindled in* our Church *by others, which if not extinguiſhed may burn down all its* Legal Eſtabliſhment, *and conſume whatever is moſt Beautiful in the* Chriſtian Religion,

gion, *I think that* he *who can bring but a* Spoonful *of* Water *to quench the* Flame, *may be as commendable as* he *who can bring an Hogſhead; and that in a* common Fire, *the* Greateſt *of* Princes *would not refuſe the* Aſſiſtance *of the* meaneſt Porter.

Neither would I have the Reader imagine, that I appear againſt the Biſhop, *as a* Manager *at a* Tryal, *who muſt ſay all he can, to make the* accuſed Party *appear* Guilty. *Let* that *be done by thoſe who think it their Duty, or a Part of their* Legal Privileges *ſo to do. I have only gratified his* Lordſhip's *very reaſonable Requeſt, of having his* avowed Principles *impartially examined by their* Conformity *to the* firſt Conceptions *of a* God, *to the* main Deſign, *and* Doctrines *of the* Goſpel, *and to the* Canons, Articles, *and* Conſtitutions *of the* Eſtabliſhed Church. *If the Reſult of the Examination does not pleaſe his* Lordſhip *and his* Friends, *the Fault is not in* me, *who cannot reconcile Contradictions, but rather in* him *who impoſed ſo unreaſonable and impoſſible a Task upon me.*

Neither, Laſtly, would I have my Reader ſuppoſe, that I am at all concerned in the Controverſy between his Lordſhip *and the* Committee, *concerning the meaning of many of his* Lordſhip's *Sentences in his Sermon. When the Controverſy is come to that* low Ebb, *of determining*

mining what was the true Senſe *of ſome very* uncommon Phraſes, *I always paſs it by, and, preſuming the* Biſhop *to have* beſt Right *to give an* Explanation *of* his own Words, *I only argue againſt* thoſe Explanations *where I find them contrary to* Truth *and* Reaſon.

I need not inform a Judicious Reader, that as I have no Commiſſion from the Committee *to write in their* Defence, *whatever* Defects *he finds in the following* Treatiſe, *they are to be aſcribed to* my ſelf, *and not to that* Learned Body; *My Buſineſs was not to make good their* Charge *againſt* Propoſitions *which his* Lordſhip *will not own, but to ſhew that* thoſe *which he does own, in Pages* 111 *and* 112 *of his Book, as expreſſive of his real Sentiments, are neither agreeable to* Reaſon, *nor to the* Word *of* God. *But if he think that I have omitted any Thing from the* 147th *Page of his Book to the End, or ſo far as I have proceeded, I am ready to add a* Third Part, *wherein nothing that his* Lordſhip *has ſaid in the whole Book ſhall be left without an impartial Examination of its Congruity to the* Word *of* God, *and the* Articles *and* Canons *of the* Eſtabliſhed Church.

If the Reader thinks the Controverſy is Dead, *let him believe this was wrote, with a ſincere Intention, to prevent its* Reſurrection.

Farewel.

A

Review of, &c.

IT muſt needs be a *glorious way of Preaching* for *Edification*, when *one* little *Sermon* requires Four or Five hundred Pages of *Explication*, eſpecially when the *Preacher's Interpretation* of the Words is juſt as far diſtant from the *Truth*, as *Earth* is from *Heaven*. I muſt confeſs the *miſtaking* the *true Senſe* of a *Text*, is to be reckoned, not among the *Crimes*, but the *Weakneſſes*, or *Deficiences* of *Humane Nature*, and if *Scaffolds* were to be built for the *Tryal* of every *Miniſter*, who was *miſtaken* in the *true meaning* of his *Text*, it might coſt *the Government* as much *Timber*, in the erecting of *Scaffolds*, as would ſerve for the equipping and ſetting forth a *Royal Navy*. Great *Allowances* are to be made for thoſe *ſubitaneous Diſcourſes* called *Sermons*, for ſome *unguarded Expreſſions*, which, as delivered with all the advantages of *Geſture* and *Elocution*, may charm *the Ears* of the *greateſt Men*, and yet be unable to bear the *ſtrict Teſt* of a *Theological Diſcuſſion*; whence *Men* of ſolid Judgments have admired *ſome Sermons* from *the Pulpit*, which they derided and cenſured from the Preſs. But *vindications* of *Sermons* are not to be treated with the *ſame Favour*, becauſe they are preſumed to be the real and fix'd *Sentiments* of an *Author* admoniſhed to be upon his Guard, and to expreſs himſelf in *Terms* ſo far from *Ambiguities*, that his *greateſt Adverſaries* ſhall not be able to fix any *Criminal Senſe* upon them.

I will therefore willingly allow *the Biſhop* what he claims (*p.* 8. *Preface*) of *knowing his own Deſign, and Principles, and explaining Himſelf accordingly*, Provided He will allow me the free Liberty of *Examining*, whether *thoſe Explanations* are agreeable to *ſound Doctrine*.

I ſhall not therefore tire my *Reader* in the following *Review*, with Inquiries what *the Biſhop meant*, but whether *the Biſhop's* Poſitions are agreeable to the *Scriptural Doctrines of a Church*, *the Sentiments and Practice of the Primitive Chriſtians*, *the Conſtitution and Canons of the Engliſh Church*, and *the Civil Laws of the Britiſh Nations*, as well as to the *firſt Principles of Humane Reaſon*.

Pref. Page 9. He promiſes the World *a Collection* out of the moſt famous *Chriſtian Writers*, of *this*, and of *former Ages*. But if ſo *great a Genius* ſcorns to be ſubmitted to *any Authority* but that of *his own Conſcience*, that is *of Himſelf*, for *Conſcience* is but another Name for *Self*, and teaches others to ſubmit *their Judgments* to nothing elſe but *Self-Authority*, and *Self-Determination*, it is in vain to bring in *leſſer Authorities* into the *Field of Battle*, there to have them derided and over-powered, by the *ſupreme Authority* of *Self-Legiſlation*, and *Self-Deciſion*. And therefore He ingenuouſly confeſſes, that He is *not deſirous to induce any Perſons to receive what He has taught, for the ſake of great Names, or upon that Argument of Authority*, which, He ſays, *He truly diſdains*. (p. 10.) (as knowing no *Authority* greater than *his own*) but that *He* will make this *Collection to ſhew, that He is not alone, but has Clouds of Witneſſes*, which *He* can call to the Aſſiſtance of *His Doctrines*.

I anſwer, that if *the Conſcience* is *a thouſand Witneſſes*, the ſummoning of *a thouſand more*, is to little, or no Purpoſe. But if I thought they could have *any Influence* upon ſo *great a Man*, I could ſummon *ten thouſand more* to ſhew, that *the Biſhop of* Bangor, is the *Author* of more *Singularities*, (or as *the Phyſitians* call them *Noſtrums*) in the *Doctrines of Chriſtianity*, than any one *Biſhop* ſince the *Preaching* of the *Goſpel*. But I will not ſay all thoſe *Singularities* are *falſe*, or *dangerous Poſitions*, 'till the Caſe is determined by *Scripture*, or by *Reaſon*, the two only *Judges*, whoſe *Authority* the *Biſhop* will allow.

As for the *ill uſage from Pulpits*, of which *His Lordſhip* complains, *(p.* 11.*)* I have nothing to ſay of it, ſince *His Lordſhip* has receiv'd none from mine. As *Pulpits* are rather *Seats* of *Charity* than *Contention*, I will take what Care I can, that nothing for, or againſt *His Lordſhips Novelties*, ſhall ever come from mine, ſince the *Common People* are apt to judge of *Doctrines*, as they do of ſome *vile Commodities*, viz. that thoſe which are moſt *new* and *freſh*, are moſt ſound and laſting. But ſince the *Provocation* came from *the Pulpit*, it is no great Wonder if it begets a *Pulpit War*, which *His Lordſhip* ought

to

to bear with the utmoſt of *Chriſtian Patience*, becauſe 'tis plain that *His own Pulpit* ſtrook firſt.

As for *Perſonal Affronts*, of which He complains (*p.* 13.) as I offer *none* to *Him*, ſo neither do I fear *any* which I am likely to receive from *His Friends* or *Enemies*.

I agree with *His Lordſhip* (*p.* 14.) that it is *a Cauſe upon which the Goſpel, the Reformation, the Church of* England, *as well as the Common Rights of Mankind do depend*. And therefore I ſhall behave my ſelf ſo in it, as One who is not afraid of ſpeaking the Truth in the Face of the greateſt Dangers. And tho' I may looſe *the Camp* for want of *perſonal Abilities* to defend it, I will not looſe it for want of *Chriſtian Courage*, to ſpeak the *Words of Truth*, without Hypocriſy or Prevarication.

The firſt and ſecond Pages of His *Introduction* contain only thoſe *Flouriſhes* from *common Topicks*, which may, with a little variation, be as ſerviceable to *me* as to *Himſelf*. (p. 3.) He lays down three Propoſitions: *viz.* "I. Whatſoever is "contrary to the firſt *Notions* of *a God*, eſtabliſhed upon the "*Evidences of Reaſon*, cannot be admitted by any One, who "believes *a God* upon *thoſe Evidences*. II. Whatſoever is "contrary to the plain *Deſign*, or *Declarations* of the *Goſpel*, "cannot be received by any who believes the *Goſpel*. III. "Whatſoever is contradictory to thoſe *fundamental Princi-* "*ples* of the *Reformation*, without which it could never have "been at firſt, and now can never be defended, cannot "knowingly be received by any *true Proteſtant*.

All theſe Propoſitions I will admit as true, and thence infer, that it is *my Duty* to examine *the Biſhop's Doctrines*, 1*ſt*. By their congruity to the firſt Notions we have of *God*. 2*dly*. The manifeſt Declaration of his *Goſpel*. 3*dly*. The avowed Principles of our *firſt Reformers*. By which I underſtand the *firſt Reformers of our own Church*, for at preſent I have no Buſineſs with *Foreign Churches*.

(*p.* 3.) He ſays, "That the *General Charge* with which "*the Repreſentation* (*of the Committee*) begins, is that *He* had "given *great Offence* by certain *Doctrines*, and *Poſitions* by "*Him* lately Publiſhed, Partly, in a *Sermon*, Intituled, *The* "*Nature of the Kingdom or Church of Chriſt*, and Partly, in a "*Book*, Intituled, *A Preſervative againſt the Principles and* "*Practices of the* Non-Jurors.

I anſwer, That as I am no Member of *the Convocation*, nor authorized by *Them* to write *their Defence*, I have not preſumed to draw *my Charge* upon *the Biſhop's Doctrines* from *the*

Report of their *Committee*, but from *the expreſs Sentences of his Lordſhip's Sermon*; which I am ready to retract, whenever *His Lordſhip* can convince *me* that I have not done *Him* Juſtice. But with His *Preſervative*, I have at this Inſtant little or nothing to do.

To this *General Charge* of *the Committee*, the *Biſhop* anſwers, " That the giving great Offence, is far from being a *Token* of " *Error*, or *evil Intention*. ' For (*p.* 4.) He ſhews largely, that ſuch *Offences* were given by *Chriſt* to the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, and by our *firſt Reformers* to *the Papiſts*. And he ſays, " *the* " *giving Offence*, in the Senſe of *making Mens Minds uneaſy in* " *the Notions, and Practices, in which they have before reſted*, is " not either a *Crime*, or a *Scandal*.

I anſwer, It is ſo far from being *a Crime*, or *a Scandal*, that it is the Height of *Humane Glory* to redeem our *Fellow Creatures* from the *Bondage* of *vulgar Errors*, tho' it ſhould happen that the Senſe of *the Committee* was not, that *the Biſhop* had *made many angry* at his *Sermon*, but that he *had given Offence unto many*, by advancing ſuch *dangerous Poſitions and Doctrines*, as tended to lead the *Hearers* into *Sin* and *Error*. *He that offendeth one of theſe little Ones, it were better for him that a Mil-ſtone was hanged about his Neck, and he was thrown into the Sea*, that is, not *He* who makes them *angry*, but *He* who leads them into *Sin* and *Error*. For tho' *one Man* may very innocently, and vertuouſly provoke *another* unto *anger*, by endeavouring to convince him of *his Errors*, (as the *Apoſtle* ſays to *the Galatians*, *Am I your Enemy, becauſe I tell you the Truth?*) yet *no Man* can be Innocent, who leads his *Fellow Chriſtians* into *dangerous Errors*, tho' the *ſeduced Diſciples* are mightily pleaſed and delighted with them. I would not therefore adviſe *the Biſhop* to the preſumption of comparing *his Caſe* with *that* of *Chriſt*, and his *Holy Apoſtles*. They *made many angry* by *Preaching the Truth*, but they neither would, or could be guilty of the Sin of *deceiving* any. In the Aſſurance of which, St. *Paul* tells the *Corinthians*, that he was *free from the Blood of all Men*.

After this ſhort Introduction, the *Biſhop* reduces *the Charge* of the *Comittee* to two Heads. " The Firſt, That the *Ten-* " *dency* of His *Doctrines* was conceived to be, to *ſubvert all* " *Government and Diſcipline in the Church of Chriſt, and to bring it into a State of Anarchy and Confuſion*. This I muſt nicely conſider, becauſe it is agreeable to *the Charge*, I make in ſeveral Pages of the *Firſt Part* of this Diſcourſe.

The

The *Biſhop*, in order to His Juſtification, ſays, " That this " *Evil Tendency* with Reſpect to the *Church of Chriſt*, muſt be " conſidered under *three views* only, ' (the fourth his Lordſhip has forgotten) *viz.* " The *Univerſal Inviſible Church*, " made up of thoſe who do truly and ſincerely in their Hearts " believe in *Chriſt Jeſus*. Or, the *Univerſal viſible Church*, " made up of thoſe who do openly *profeſs Him*, (whether " ſincerely, or inſincerely,) or, ſome one *Particular viſible* " *Church*; ' which for greater Expedition we will preſuppoſe to be our own. But he forgets *a fourth view* of the *Church of Chriſt*, conſiſting of ſuch Members as having departed hence in the *Faith* and *Fear* of the Lord, are with *Him* Triumphant in the *Higheſt Heavens*. For tho' it is impoſſible for *the Biſhop* and his *Friends* to bring *Anarchy* and *Confuſion* into the *Church Triumphant*, yet it is poſſible for them to teach ſuch *Doctrines* of *Submiſſion*, or *Diſobedience* to *Spiritual Guides* and *Governors*, as may tend to prepare, or exclude *Men* from it, either by the *Natural Tendency* which *God* has given to ſuch *Habits* of the Mind towards *Miſery* or *Happineſs*; or, the *Revealed Conditions* of *Eternal Salvation*, delivered by *Chriſt*, and his *Holy Apoſtles*. But be that as it will, it is certain, that if this *Society of Saints in Heaven* is the *only Kingdom of Chriſt*, whereof *He* ſpeaks in *the Biſhops* Text, it gives a full *Non ſequitur* to all thoſe *Poſitions* drawn from it, tho' in themſelves they were true and harmleſs. And I deſire His *Lordſhip* to ſhew me one Place of *Scripture*, wherein *the Univerſal Church of Chriſt upon Earth*, conſiſting of *Hypocrites*, as well as *true Believers*, was ever called *Chriſt's Kingdom*. I will not deny but that as *Chriſt* is *the Son of the Living God*, all *Pagans*, *Turks*, *Jews*, and *Infidels*, are in a Figurative Senſe, *the Subjects of Chriſt's Kingdom*, in as much as *He* is able, to *break them with a Rod of Iron*, to *daſh them in Pieces like a Potters Veſſel*, (Pſ 2. 9.) and ſo may *Hypocrites*, and *Rebels* be ſtiled, who profeſs the *Chriſtian Religion*, but *hold the Faith of Chriſt in unrighteouſneſs*. But neither *Theſe*, nor *Thoſe good Men*, who, whilſt they are in the *Fleſh*, can only pay an *imperfect Obedience* to the *Commands* of their *Bleſſed Saviour*, can be properly called *the Subjects of Chriſt's Kingdom*, becauſe as *the Apoſtle* ſays, *Fleſh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, neither doth Corruption inherit Incorruption.*

But I will grant, that tho' none of *the Poſitions* charged as *dangerous* upon *the Biſhop*, were deducible from His *Text*, yet if they were agreeable to the Tenor of *Scripture*, and directive of the Way to *Chriſt's Heavenly Kingdom*, they ought not

to

to be Cenſured, but Applauded by all Pious Chriſtians; and that *the Biſhop* has ſtated the Caſe *(p. 6.)* between *Him* and *the Convocation* very fairly; and therefore the *Poſitions* laid to his Charge as *dangerous*, are to be examined fairly by *Scripture*, *Reaſon*, and Congruity to the *Principles of the Eſtabliſh'd Church*.

I am now obliged to wait upon Him to his Second Section. *(p. 7.)* wherein He recites the four chief *Paſſages* in His *Sermon*, whereon *the Committee* founded *their Charge* of *Anarchy* and *Diſſolution of all Eccleſſaſtical Government and Diſcipline*. But having ſaid enough to them in the firſt Part, I will proceed to the *Biſhop's* vindication of Himſelf, *(p. 10.)* wherein He complains that *Juſtice* is not done *Him*, becauſe *All* his Words are not recited, which might ſerve to explain *His true meaning*. He ſaith, *(p. 11.)* the Beginning of the accuſed *Paragraph* declares (after an Aſſertion that *no one* had *Authority* over *another* in *Chriſt's Kingdom.*) " The matter " is not at all made better by Men's declaring themſelves " Vice-gerents *&c.* under Chriſt in order to carry on the " Ends of his Kingdom. ' For, ſaith He, I added, It comes " to this at laſt, that if Men have the Power of Interpret- " ing Laws, or Judging Men in ſuch a Senſe, that Chriſti- " ans ſhall be *Abſolutely* and *Indiſpenſably* obliged to obſerve " ſuch Laws, and to ſubmit to thoſe Deciſions, whether they " happen to agree with *Chriſt's* or no, then theſe Men are " *Kings* in *Chriſt's Kingdom.* ' That is in plainer Engliſh, they are Traitors, and Rebels to Chriſt's Government.

So that upon Suppoſition that Men are taught, that they are *Abſolutely* and *Indiſpenſably* obliged to ſubmit to any *Eccleſiaſtical Laws* made by *Men*, they are in a State of Rebellion againſt *God* and *his Son*. Which diſmal Conſequence the *Biſhop* is ſo far from denying, that He confirms it by his own Explanation, *(p. 12.)* " The *expreſs* meaning, ſaith he, of the " whole is, That whoever has an *Authority* to which you are " *Abſolutely* and *Indiſpenſably* oblig'd to ſubmit your ſelf, let " him call himſelf a *Vice-gerent* under *another*, *&c.* yet if you " are *Indiſpenſably* and *Abſolutely* oblig'd to ſubmit to *him*, " it is *He* that is your King, and your Lawgiver, and not that " *other* in whoſe Name he acts.

To this I anſwer, that the *Biſhop's* Explanation is a full Juſtification, of whatſoever *the Committee*, or *my ſelf* have laid to his Charge, concerning *Anarchy*, and the *total Diſſolution of Church Diſcipline*. For *Children* are *Indiſpenſably* and *Abſolutely* obliged to ſubmit themſelves to their *Parents* (for the

Laws

Laws of Nature are Indiſpenſable, and the Law of God is abſolute and Poſitive, *Honour thy Father, and thy Mother)* and yet *their Parents* do not thereby become *their Kings*, for then the *Eldeſt Son* of every *Parent* would become thereby *a Dauphine*, or *a Prince of Wales*, or at leaſt *a Prince of the Blood*. The like may be ſaid of the Subjection *Wives* owe to their *Husbands*, *Servants* to their *Maſters*, &c. To all which, there is an *Abſolute* and *Indiſpenſible* Obligation due, by the expreſs Commands of *God*, as *Vice-gerents* to *Him* (who is the Fountain of all Authority) without that vain ſuppoſition, that by paying them this *limited Obedience*, we make them *ſuperior* to *Himſelf*. For all *Authority* is from *God*, none can be juſtly claimed by *any*, but *One*, acting as the *Agent*, or *Vice-gerent* of *God*. As *Chriſt* ſays to *Pilate* (Joh. 19. 11.) *Thou couldſt have no Power* (or *Authority*) *at all againſt me, except it were given thee from above*. And certainly no Man can be more miſtaken in the *Nature* and *Extent* of *Vice-gerency*, than his *Lordſhip* ſeems to be in this brief Explanation of His meaning. For if *a Vice-gerent* of an *unlimited Monarch* ſhould produce an *unlimited Commiſſion* in his *Maſters* Name, to give *Directionary Laws*, the *Obedience* the *Subjects* paid to *theſe*, and the *indiſpenſable Obligation they* thought *themſelves* to lie under ſo to do, would not make this *Vice-gerent* their *King*, but rather confirm the *Authority* of *Him* who gave the *unlimited Commiſſion*.

1*ſt*. Becauſe the receiving *the Commiſſion* from *Him* is a plain acknowledgment of *Subjection* in the *Receiving Party*.

2*dly*, Becauſe where ſuch *Commiſſions* are revocable by an *higher Power*, they can be no marks of *Sovereignty*, which is never dependent upon any thing but it ſelf.

3*dly*, Becauſe the *Obedience* is not paid as due to the *Perſon* of the *Vice-gerent*, but to *Him* who ſigned his *Commiſſion*; ſo that the *Subjects* who were obliged to pay the *Duty* of *Submiſſion* to *John* or *James*, would pay the ſame to *William*, or *Richard*, if *they* could produce the *ſame Commiſſion* from the *ſame Perſon*.

4*thly*, Becauſe *Submiſſion* to *Deputies* and *Vice-gerents*, is *Abſolutely* neceſſary and Eſſential to *the Allegiance* due to *all Earthly Monarchs*. For to ſuppoſe that *any great Monarch* can be able to govern his *Empire* without *Deputies*, or *Vice-gerents*, is to ſuppoſe that *He* can be *Omniſcient*, and *Omnipreſent*, which are the *Attributes* of *God*, and not of *Man*. *Obedience* therefore to *Deputies* or *Vice gerents*, is a neceſſary *Obedience* to the *Monarch himſelf*.

5*thly*,

5thly, Becauſe *He* who receives *an unlimited Commiſſion* from an *unlimited Monarch*, may require as *unlimited an Obedience*, as the *Monarch Himſelf* can require, for *all Powers*, excepting *thoſe* which are *Eſſential* to the *Godhead*, may be *delegated* from *one to another*, without *tranſlation of Soverſignty*, provided the *Delegated*, or *Deputed Perſon*, acts not in *his own Name*, but in the *Name* of *Him* who ſent him.

6thly, and *laſtly*, If an *unlimited Monarch* gives a *limited Commiſſion*, to any *Perſon* or *Perſons* (which comes neareſt to the Caſe of *Chriſt* and *His Church*) an *Abſolute* and *Indiſpenſable Obedience* is due to *thoſe Perſons*, without any Infringment of the *Monarch's Sovereign Power*. Nay rather 'tis a Confirmation and Recognition of it. It is *Abſolute Obedience*, not becauſe it is to be extended to *all Things* but becauſe it muſt be paid *Abſolutely* and *Neceſſarily* to *all Things* contained in the *Commiſſion*, as a Debt to the *Original Monarch*; and it is *Indiſpenſable*, not becauſe the *Monarch Himſelf* cannot, or will not Pardon, (for *Pardons* are but a Species of *Diſpenſations*) but becauſe the *Subject* can't free Himſelf from the *Puniſhment* due to *Rebellion*, if he denies *Obedience* to the *King's Vice-gerent*, eſpecially to *thoſe things* wherein he is commiſſioned to act, without the *King's* Pardon.

Now to apply this to the Caſe of *Chriſt* and *His Church*. The Biſhop's Doctrine, is (*p.* 13) "That *He* to whomſoever *Obe-*
"*dience* is *Abſolutely* and *Indiſpenſably* due, is *your King*, and
"not *Chriſt* whoſe *Vice-gerent* he pretends to be." That is in plainer Engliſh, whatſoever *Biſhop*, *Prieſt* or *Deacon* demands *Obedience* from you, in *any one thing*, whatſoever, under a Pretence of *acting in Chriſt's Name*, and as *Chriſt's Vice-gerent*, tho' He ſhould require you to believe *the ſame Articles* which *Chriſt Himſelf* Taught, and to do *thoſe things* which *Chriſt* has not forbidden, nay which *Himſelf* has commanded, (for ſo the Biſhop expreſly ſays) whether he happens to give you *a Law* agreeably to the *Laws* of *that other* (that is of *Chriſt*) or no *&c.*—— He is *your King*. That is, He is a *Rebel* to *Chriſt*, and you are *Rebels* if you obey *Him*. *If you are* (ſays the Biſhop) *obliged Abſolutely to obey it, as it comes from Him, without comparing it with the* WILL OF THE OTHER.

But I would fain ask the Biſhop, what need there is of *comparing the Will of any Eccleſiaſtical Judge* whatever, *with the Will of Chriſt*, if it be *High Treaſon* to obey *Him*, whether *His Laws are agreeable to the Laws of Chriſt or no?* The *Biſhop* does not blame in theſe Words, the *matter* of *Humane Laws*, but makes the *very Act* of *Legiſlation* Criminal before *God* and *Man*.

Man. It is the *requiring Obedience*, and the *paying Obedience*, which in *His Opinion* are Tantamount to the *Dethronization* of *Chriſt*, and ſetting up *Humane Juriſdiction* above *Divine Authority*.

The *Biſhop* prudently foreſaw, that if He ſhould grant *any Obedience* due to *Spiritual Guides* and *Teachers*, the *Proteſtant Diſſenters* could not be excuſed from *Obedience* to *ſuch Laws, Canons, and Conſtitutions* of *Our Church*, as agreeable to the *Word of God*. *He* knew very well that it could be ſufficiently proved, that nothing diſagreeable to the *Word of God* was to be found in them; and that therefore there was no way left to excuſe *their Diſobedience*, but by teaching, that *all Government* whether *Good* or *Bad* was unlawful in *Chriſt's Kingdom*, (as *he* calls the *viſible Church*) For this not only excuſes *all Diſobedience* to *Good Laws*, but makes it a *neceſſary Duty*, and is equally favourable to *Chriſtians*, at leaſt, of *all Perſuaſions*, exempting them *all equally* from the Force of *all Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures*, and Subjection to *all Eccleſiaſtical Governors* whatſoever.

He ſays indeed there is not the leaſt *Tendency* in the fore cited *Paſſages* of *His Sermon* and *Vindication*, " To ſpeak a-" gainſt regarding thoſe *Deciſions* and *Judgments* of *Men*, " which are found upon Conſideration to be agreeable to " the *Will of Chriſt*, and are to be received as ſuch.' But ſuppoſe that *any publick Humane Deciſions*, upon the Conſideration of a *Private Man* are by *Him* found, (that is determined) to be *not Agreeable* to the *Will* of *Chriſt*, when in reality they are ſo; Is a Man in no danger of ſinning thro' the *Dictates* of an *Erroneous Conſcience*, becauſe by *it* he oppoſes the *Authority* and *Deciſions* of *Men*, tho' true in *matters of Faith*, and juſt in *matters of Practice*? Here is no room for Conſideration, whether the *matter* of the *Law* or *Canon*, is agreeable to *Truth*, and *Juſtice*, or no, the Man's *Obedience* to *any Deciſions* of *Humane Authority*, makes Him a Partaker of *their Rebellion*, who uſurp'd *that Authority* in the *Kingdom* of *Chriſt*. This is built upon a Preſumption that *Chriſt* has *no Vice-gerents* upon *Earth*, for if *he* had *any*, tho' they were not *Infallible*, yet an *Abſolute*, and *Indiſpenſable Obedience* would be due to *them* in their Preaching *true Doctrines*, and making *Laws* agreeable to *his Will*. And if *he* has left *his Church* without *Vice-gerents*, *he* has left it in a *State* of *Anarchy*, which ſignifies a *Community* without an *Head* to rule it.

To ſet this matter of great Importance in its true Light. A two fold *Submiſſion* is required of us in the *Goſpel*, viz. of our *Underſtandings* to whatever *Chriſt* has declared to be true,

and of our *Wills* to whatſoever *he* has commanded to be done. In our Controverſy with the *Papiſts*, the Queſtion is not, whether *Chriſt* and *his Spirit* are not to be believed in whatſoever they reveal, but whether the *Holy Ghoſt*, or *Spirit of Chriſt*, did really inſpire thoſe *Popes*, or *Councils*, by which they are determined in *all matters of Faith*; or whether they had *any General Commiſſion* from *Chriſt* to determine *all Controverſies* in the *Chriſtian Church*. If they could ſhew an *unlimited Commiſſion* from the *unlimited Monarch* of *Heaven*, no Man in his Senſes could think it Criminal to pay an *unlimited Obedience* to them. But as they can produce no *Commiſſion* given to St. *Peter* to conſtitute *him Sovereign* of the *Apoſtles*, no *Charter* from *Heaven* to make the *Biſhops* of *Rome* Succeſſors to St. *Peter's Sovereignty*, we ſhould be falſe to our *Saviour's Government*, if we ſhould pay a *blind Obedience*, to all their extravagant Impoſition.

Our Controverſy with the *Presbyterians*, and ſome other *Proteſtant* Diſſenters is not, Whether *Chriſt* has left no *Deputies*, or *Vice-gerents* in *his Church*; but Whether the *Dioceſan Biſhop*, or the *Parochial Prieſt* is *that Vice-gerent* (either ſingly, or acting in Council together) who has *that Authority* from *Chriſt our Head* beſtow'd on him. It is not, Whether we are to obey *any*, calling themſelves *Chriſt's Vice-gerents* in *all things* they command us (for that was never believed in any *Proteſtant Nation*) but Whether the things commanded by the *Biſhops* of the *Church* in the *Worſhip of God*, or thoſe enjoyned by *Diſſenting Miniſters* are moſt agreeable to the *Will* of *God*.

But our Controverſy with the *Bangorians* is, Whether an *Abſolute* and *indiſpenſable Obligation* to ſubmit our *Underſtandings* to the *Deciſions* of *any* calling themſelves *Chriſt's-Vicegerent*, in Things taught by *himſelf* and *his Apoſtles*; or our *Wills* to the *Obedience* of thoſe *Deciſions* which are (to ſpeak in the *Biſhop's* Words p. 12.) *agreeable to the Laws of Chriſt*, is a *Dethronization* of *Chriſt*, and placing thoſe *Law-givers* in *his Throne* whom we ſo obey. This ſuppoſes that *Chriſt* has left no *Vice-gerents* with *unlimited* or *limited Commiſſions*, behind *him*, and is that very *ſtate* of *Anarchy*, which the *Committee* lays to *his* Charge, and in *his Vindication* of *himſelf* is aſſerted by *him*. For *he* ſays the forecited Paſſages contain the only Senſe of which *his Words* are capable. (p. 13.)

In *his*, Sect. 3. *p.* 14. " He bleſſes God that in the *ſolemn* " *Charge* againſt *his Doctrines* and *Poſitions*, he does not find " that it is once laid upon them, that they are *Falſe* or *Unchri-*

" *ſtian*,

" ſtian," But if *Anarchical Principles* are *falſe Principles*; or *Principles* tending to the taking away *his Brethren's Bread*, and diſtributing it amongſt *Strangers*, are *uncharitable Principles*, *his Lordſhip* would be very unhappy, if both ſhould be proved upon *him*.

He ſaith, " He does not find that it is expreſly denied, " either that *the Church is the Kingdom of Chriſt*, or that the " *Doctrines* he has built upon *that* Propoſition are *genuine*, and *juſt Conſequences* from it.

I anſwer, (that *his Lordſhip* may hear what he never heard before) I do expreſly deny that *Chriſt* in *this Text* does call the *viſible Church upon Earth*, conſiſting of more *Bad* than *Good Men*, by the Name of *his Kingdom*. The Reaſons whereof need not be again repeated. But as I was ſo fair to *his Lordſhip*, as not to charge *him* with *Anarchical Principles* from the expreſs Words of his Sermon, but thoſe of *his Anſwer* in the *Vindication* of it, in which *his Lordſhip* has not ſpoken one Word of *any Obedience* due to *Spiritual Guides, Teachers, and Maſters*, ſo neither would I have been at all concerned, whether thoſe *Poſitions* the *Convocation* calls *Dangerous*, were legitimately drawn from *his Text* or no; provided, they had been found agreeable to *the Word of God*, *the Senſe of the Univerſal*, and *the Principles of the Eſtabliſhed Church*, which are three Criterions of *his Lordſhip's* own propoſing.

But when *Poſitions* concerning *Chriſt's Church upon Earth*, are drawn from the Nature of his *Church in Heaven*, and the *Figurative Denomination* of *Kingdom*, is laid as the *Foundation* of all Properties of *Chriſt's Church militant here upon Earth*, I hope *his Lordſhip* will not take it amiſs, if I put *him* in mind, that *Figures of Rhetorick*, give but a very weak *Foundation*, for *Logical Deductions*, which can ſtand the *Teſt* of impartial Reaſon; and of this I will give one pregnant Inſtance, which tho' it may ſeem *a Digreſſion*, yet it is not altogether Foreign to our preſent Purpoſe.

It is ſaid by Chriſt (*Luk.* 17. 21) ἡ Βασιλεία τ Θεῦ ἐν τὸς ὑμῶν ἐστιν. *The Kingdom of God is within you.* If we ſhould take theſe Words in as *Literal* a Senſe, as the *Biſhop* takes *his Text*, the following Propoſitions, will be the Legitimate *Conſequences* of this Propoſition.

1. If every Man has *a Kingdom within him*, he muſt have *a King within him*, for *King* and *Kingdom* are mutual Relations to one another.

2. If every Man has *a King within him*, then he muſt have the *whole* and *ſole Legiſlature within him*, for tho' this is more

than the *Biſhop* will allow as eſſential to *King-ſhip*, in ſome of *his* Theologico-Politico Treatiſes, yet it is ſuppoſed by *him* in his Explanation of *his Text*, or none of his *Poſitions* called *Dangerous* by the *Committee*, could follow from it. And is agreeable to *Solomon's* Notion *of King ſhip, where the Word of a King is, there is Power*, that is, Legiſlative Authority.

3. If the *whole Legiſlature* is in every *individual Chriſtian*, there is no need of ſummoning *General Councils*, nor *Synods*, or of liſtning at all to them, for the Will of *the King within* determines all things.

4. If every *individual Chriſtian* has *a King within him*, he ought not to pay *Tithes*, or *Taxes* to the Officers of *the King* without him, for *the Children of the Kingdom are free*.

5. If every Man has a *King within him*, no Man can challenge *any Dominion* over him, either *Spiritual* or *Temporal*, for *all Kings* being equal, *one Man's King* is not to command *another Man's King*, for then that *other Man's King* would become a *Subject*. *Quod eſt abſurdum.*

6. No Man ought to ſuffer for any thing he believes, or does, in order to eternal Salvation (according to *the Biſhop of* Bangor's *Poſition*) for he does it by virtue of his *King's* Command, and who ſhall dare to govern, or puniſh, the *Subjects* of another Man's *King*.

7. No Man ought to ſhew any *Civil Reſpect* to another, for all *Kings* are of equal Dignity in their own *Kingdoms*.

8. If every Man has *a Kingdom within him*, then *all Kingdoms without him*, ought to be eſteemed as Uſurpations, and *Invaſions*, of the *Kingdom within him*, and the whole *Poſſe* of the *internal Kingdom*, is to be raiſed againſt thoſe *external Pretenders* to Domination.

9. If every Chriſtian has *a King within him*, no Man who obeys *this King* can miſs of his Way to Heaven, for let him travel in the *Broad*, or in the *narrow Road*, if he is ſure to follow *his King*, his *Loyalty* in following *his King*, (that is, his own Fancy) will carry him to Heaven, tho' *his King* ſhould happen to travel in that *broad Road*, which *other Men's Kings* do think, leads to Hell and Deſtruction.

10. If every Man has *a Kingdom within him*, there can be no *Schiſm*, *Hereſy*, or *Blaſphemy*, in that *internal Kingdom*. For *Schiſm* is *a ſeparation from a lawful Government*, but when a Man's *Governor* is *within himſelf*, he can't *ſeperate* from that *Government*, unleſs he ſeperate from himſelf. *Quod eſt abſurdum. Hereſy* is *an Opinion condemned as falſe, by a ſuperior Authority*, but no *Authority* can be *ſuperior* to the *Authority of*

a *King*, (if taken in its old ſignification, in the Times of *Juſtin*—— *Principio Rerum Imperium penes Reges erat*) and therefore no *Opinion* can be *Heretical*, which is agreeable to that *internal Kingly Authority*. *Blaſphemy* is *ſpeaking ill of the ſupreme Authority*, (ſo ſaid the Accuſers of *Nabal*, *he hath Blaſphemed God and the King*) but no Man can *ſpeak ill* of the *King*, or *ſupreme Legiſlative Power within him*, without *ſpeaking ill* of himſelf, which ſuch godly Men are not very apt to do.

How ridiculous, or abſurd ſoever theſe *Poſitions* may ſeem to be, they are as *legitimate Conſequences* from thoſe Words of *Chriſt*, *The Kingdom of God is within you*, as any of thoſe *Poſitions*, which the *Committee*, or my ſelf, have called *Dangerous*, are from thoſe other Words of *Chriſt*, *my Kingdom is not of this World*, if both are taken in the *Literal* and *Grammatical Senſe*.

But if we examine the *Occaſion* of theſe Words, we ſhall find nothing like this Senſe in them. The *Scribes* and *Phariſees* demanded of *Chriſt*, *when the Kingdom of God ſhould come*, that is, when that great *Meſſiah* they were promiſed by the *Prophets*, as the *King of the Jews*, ſhould appear, and what *ſtrange Sights* or *Apparitions* ſhould be the fore-runners of his coming? *Chriſt* anſwers, that no ſuch Tokens were to be expected, for he was not to come, μετὰ παρατηρήσεως, *with*, or, *after the Obſervation* of any of *thoſe Prodigies*, they expected, but was actually come already, that he who ſtood ἐντὸς αὐτῶν, *before*, or, *in the midſt* of thoſe unbelieving *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, was that *very King* which they expected from Heaven, which is the very ſame Thing which he declared to the *Samaritan Woman*, as inquiſitive as the *Scribes* and *Phariſees* about the *Meſſiah*'s coming, *I that ſpeak unto thee am He*, Joh. 4. 26.

In like manner, *Chriſt* being accuſed before *Pilate*, for making himſelf a *King*, tells *Pilate*, he had *no Kingdom in this World*, but in another. And yet we have a Sect of Men calling themſelves *Chriſtians*, who deduce *the whole of religious Worſhip* from the firſt, and *a Biſhop of the Eſtabliſhed Church*, deducing *the whole Government of Chriſts univerſal viſible Church upon Earth*, from the other.

But if his *Lordſhips Poſitions* were *True* and *Chriſtian*, 'tis no great matter whether they follow from his *Text*. The *Committee* charge them with a *Tendancy* to *Anarchy*. The *Biſhop* has ſaid nothing in *abhorrence* of *Anarchy*, which would have ended the Controverſy, but rather ſomething

in

in *vindication* of it, or which may be underſtood to be ſo by the vulgar. For *he* makes *Conſcience* to be the *Dernier Reſort* of every Man's *ſubmiſſion*, or *not ſubmiſſion*; ſo that no Man can deſerve *Puniſhment* from *God*, or *Man*, for refuſing *Obedience* to the moſt *Juſt Commands*, or *Belief* to the *trueſt Propoſitions* of *any* demanding it as *a Vice gerent of Chriſt*; that both the *demanding* and *ſubmitting* Perſons are *Enemies* to the *Kingdom of God*.

" He, (ſaith the Biſhop) is your *King* truly and properly, " whoſe *Authority* you are in that *indiſpenſable* manner obliged to ſubmit to." And this *he* illuſtrates (p. 12.) with ſuch an inſtance of a *Deputy of Ireland*, as one would think could never have been produced by any but a *Native* of that *Illuſtrious Kingdom*. For thus he ſays, " Put the Caſe of the " *Lord Lieutenant of Ireland*. If the People *there* are *indiſpen-* " *ſably* and *abſolutely* obliged to ſubmit to *his* Deciſions, " without any Interpoſition, or Direction, from the *King* of " *England*; *he* is to all intents and Purpoſes, really, and tru- " ly *King* of *Ireland*, and the *King* of *England* is no more " *King* of *Ireland*, than *he* is of *Spain*.

I anſwer, that (not to meddle at all with the Conſtitution of *Ireland*) if *Ireland* was an Appendix to the *Britiſh Crown*, obtained by *Conqueſt*, and inveſted with no *Legal Privilege* by its *Sovereign*, a *King* of *England* might ſend a *Deputy*, with an *unlimited Commiſſion* into *Ireland*, who ſhould give *Diſcretionary Laws* in his *Maſters* name, and the People would be *indiſpenſably* obliged to obey them, whilſt *he* remained in that ſtation, without making *himſelf* a *King*; for the *indiſpenſable Obligation* is acknowledged due to the *Maſter*, and not to the *Servant*, who as long as *he* acknowledges *himſelf Dependant*, can't be ſaid to make *himſelf* a *King*, and there needs no farther Interpoſition of the *Britiſh Monarch*, to ſtrengthen the firſt Obligation. But becauſe *Ireland* is conſidered now as a *Kingdom* by it ſelf, having ſome *Laws* made by its own *Parliaments*, and as a *Province* inveſted with ſome *Legal Privileges* and *Conceſſions* to the *Subjects* from the Britiſh Throne no *Deputies* are ſent with *unlimited Commiſſions*, but yet with ſuch *Commiſſions* as *indiſpenſably* oblige the Inhabitants of *Ireland*, to a ſubmiſſion to *them* in *all things* contained in *their Commiſſion*, without making *them Kings* of *Ireland*, or the leaſt diminution of the *Authority* of the *Britiſh Throne*. And tho' *all the Subjects* may enquire whether the *Laws* made, or *Acts* done by the *Deputy* are according to the *Laws* of *England*, and no Man will deny the benefit of Conſideration to *any* who

who know how to uſe it, yet if *any* after long *Conſideration*, ſhould determine in his Mind, that *any Laws* made by the *Deputy*, according to the *Antient Rights*, and *Cuſtoms* of that *Kingdom*, are contrary to the *Laws* of *England*, when *they* are not ſo, and act according to that Determination, he might juſtly be puniſh'd as a *Rebel*, and be *indiſpenſably* oblig'd to bear *his Puniſhment* patiently, becauſe it would be no more than he deſerved for a *ſenſeleſs oppoſition* of *deputed Powers*.

Wherefore ſince the *Biſhop* does not deny the *Charge* of introducing *Anarchy* into *Chriſt's Church*, but rather ſay many Things to prove, that it was the *Original Conſtitution* of the *Chriſtian Church*, I muſt next in compliance to *his Lordſhips* Directions, examine *Anarchy* itſelf, by its Congruity to the *Sentiments* of our *firſt Reformers*, the *Scriptural Doctrines* of *the Rights* of a *Chriſtian Church*, and the firſt and cleareſt *Notions* we have of the *Nature* and *Attributes* of *God*. I will only conclude here with ſaying, that *my Lord of Bangor* was the firſt Man that ever I heard to affirm, either *Poſitively*, or *Conſequentially*, that an *indiſpenſable Obligation* to obey *Vice-gereuts*, by ſubmiſſion to *Laws agreeable to the Will of their Sovereign*, was Tantamount to the *Dethronization* of their *Lord* and *Maſter*.

Having ſufficiently proved that it is the *Biſhop's Doctrine*, that the perfection of the *Chriſtian Church* is a *ſtate* of *Anarchy*, wherein no Man has *Power* over the *Conſcience*, or *Religion* of another, I muſt now enquire whether a *ſtate* of *Anarchy* is agreeable to the *Firſt Notions* we can frame of *God*, to the *Doctrine* of the *Holy Scriptures*, and to the *Conſtitution* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*; By which three Rules the *Biſhop* deſires his *Poſitions* may be fairly tried.

I preſume *His Lordſhip* will agree with me, that *God* is a *Being* of *Infinite Wiſdom*, of *exact Juſtice*, and of *unlimited Power*. But if *God* in his *Infinite Wiſdom*, has ſo framed the State of *Humane Nature*, ſince the fall of *Adam*, that it can't ſubſiſt in any Degree of ſafety, without the Aſſiſtance of the *Civil Government*; then *Anarchy* wherein *no Man* can oblige the *Conſcience* of another to *Obedience*, muſt be repugnant to the *Firſt Conceptions* we can frame of the *Wiſdom* of our great *Creator*. For it can't be ſaid that the *World* was never in a ſtate of *Anarchy*, becauſe *God* is in ſome ſenſe, *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, and knows how to govern it alone, without appointing *Deputies*, or *Vicegrents* under *him*; for if *he* had left Men to the ſole *Law of Nature*, tho' ſanctioned with the threats of *eternal Puniſhments*, yet *that* would have not been ſufficient to have prevented thoſe *mutual Rapines, Murthers*,

thers, and *Raviſhments*, to which Men are prompted by the wickedneſs of their *corrupted Natures*. This is evident from the example of *Cam*, and the *anti-diluvian Inhabitants* of the World, who had ſo corrupted their Ways, that *Violence*, and *Injuſtice* covered the *Face* of the whole *Earth*. And this was done whilſt the *Works* of *Creation* were freſh, and gloſſy in the Eyes of all men, and the *tradition* of *God's* having framed the the *World* out of a *Chaos*, muſt needs be better known to *all Men* then, than ſince *that Time* it has been to *many Nations*. If *Anarchy* had been agreeable to the *Wiſdom of God*, no doubt but that *God* would have ſuffered the *World* to have continued in a State of *Anarchy* to this very Day; but ſince *he* has declared that *by him Kings rule, and Princes decree Juſtice*, and vouchſafes to call *Kings his own Anointed*, and Διάκονοι Θεοῦ the *Adminiſtrators of his Government*, it is madneſs to think, that there can be any thing in *Anarchy*, that can be agreeable to the *Wiſdom* of our *Heavenly Father*.

Another *Attribute* of *God* is *His Juſtice mixed with Mercy*. And as therefore *God* could not but foreſee, how *violence* and *deceit* would prevail in the Earth, if *He* ſhould give *no Man Authority* over another, how could *God* ſhew *His Juſtice* to *Mankind*, if *He* had permitted ſuch a State of *Anarchy*, wherein the *Strong* ſhould have prevailed over the *Weak*, the *Blood-thirſty* over the *Innocent Perſon*. It had been the *Heighth* of *Cruelty* to have ſent *Mankind* into the World, without giving them *Authority* to ſubſtitute *Deputies* and *Vice-gerents* in *his* Place, to require the *Blood* of the *Innocent*, at the Hands of thoſe who ſhed it; and yet *no Man* can *lawfully ſhed Blood* without a *Commiſſion* from *Heaven*, given to *Magiſtrates* in thoſe few Words, *He that ſheddeth Man's Blood, by Man ſhall his Blood be ſhed*.

Farther, no Man can have a right Conception of *God*, without acknowledging *Him* to be the *Sovereign* of the *Univerſe*, the *Fountain* of *All Authority*; or to ſpeak in a *Figurative* Senſe, tho' rather with a *diminution* than *exaltation* of the *Divine Majeſty*, the *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*. But becauſe the *ſupreme Legiſlative Power* is in *God alone*, it does not follow that *Laws* made by *Men* are *uſurpations* upon the *Divine Authority*, and that *every King* who makes a *Law* for the *Government* of *his People*, is ſo far making *himſelf* a *God* upon Earth, as he gives *Laws* to the *Inhabitants* of the Earth, which is *God's Kingdom*. For then *Anarchy*, wherein *no Man* is to command *another*, would be the *Perfection* of *Humane Nature*, And *every Man* would be ſo much

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the more a *dutiful Servant* to *God*, by how much the more he had an *immediate Regard* to *God*, and the leſs eſteem He had for thoſe *Magiſtrates*, who are called his *Subſtitutes*, or *Vice-gerents* upon Earth. And yet *Chriſt* is in no other Senſe the *King* of the *Viſible-Church*, than as *God* is *the King of all the Earth*. For *He* being *the Son of the living God*, and *the expreſs Image of his Fathers Glory*, hath the *ſame Authority* to ſettle whatever *Government He* pleaſed, to prevent *Anarchy* in *His Church*, as the *Father* had to ſettle what *Government* beſt pleaſed *Him*, to prevent thoſe *Miſchiefs* of *Anarchy*, which otherwiſe would deſtroy *all the Kingdoms of the Earth*. For as in the *Kingdoms of the Earth*, nothing but *Murther*, and *Rapine*, and *Inceſt* could follow from a State of *Anarchy*; ſo the ſame Danger of open *Hereſies*, *Blaſphemies*, and *Diviſions* would follow from *Anarchy* in the *Church of Chriſt*.

For ſuppoſe a great Multitude of Men calling themſelves *Chriſtians* were met in one Place together (tho' even That is almoſt impoſſible, unleſs they received a *Summons* from *one common Humane Authority*, equally acknowledged by all) where *no Man* was to have *any Dominion* over the *Religion* and *Conſcience* of *another*; ſhould we not be in danger of ſeeing there, *one Man* according to *his Conſcience* adoring the *Conſecrated Elements* of *Bread* and *Wine*, another according to *his Conſcience* trampling *them* under his Feet, in deteſtation of *Popiſh Superſtition*. *One Man* preaching in the *Morning*, and exhorting his Hearers to *Glorify the Son even as they Glorify the Father*, and *another* in the *Afternoon*, (if ſuch an *Anarchical Multitude* could tarry together ſo long) declaring ſolemnly according to *his Conſcience*, that the *Worſhip of the Father* is leſſned and diminiſhed, if not corrupted, and rendred Idolatrous, by the *Worſhip* paid to the *Son*, and the *Spirit*. (*Serm.* p. 6.) *One Miniſter* putting on a *White Garment* in compliance to the *Orders* of *His Church*, *another* pulling it off in Compliance to the *Dictates* of *his Conſcience*, which tells him that *Chriſt* being the *ſole Legiſlator in his own Kingdom*, the injoiners of the *Surplice* were no better than *Invaders* of *Chriſt's Dominions*. *One* receiving the *Bleſſed Sacrament* on *his Knees*, *another* ſtanding, *another* ſetting, *another* lying all along; *one* will have it in an upper Room, *another* adminiſtred to him in a Cellar, *one* in a Morning, and *another* at *Night*, and perhaps the *Conſcience* of the *Miniſter* is ſo intent upon an *immediate Regard to Chriſt*, without the interventions of *Ceremony* or *Sacrament*, that *he* has no great reſpect for *either*, and ſo will adminiſter it to none at all.

Now as all these freaks of *private Conscience*, acted in the *same Assembly*, would make an *honest Pagan* who should come into it, conclude that the *whole Congregation* was *mad* (as St. *Paul* speaks in the same Case) so there are none of these which have not been acted, or may not be acted again, by vertue of the *Bangorian Principles*, in some parts of the *visible Church* or other, and all both present and to come, were as visible to the *Son of God*, as these acted by an *Assembly*, before the Eyes of an Honest Pagan.

And if it was consistent with the *Sovereignty of God the Father* to appoint *Civil Government* (for whatever the *Bishop* may think of the *Divine Right* of *Kings*, I hope *he* will not deny the *Divine Right* of all *Civil Communities* (to prevent the *Mischiefs* of *Anarchy*, tho' such *Governors* were *Fallible* and *Peccable*, nay would be sometimes *Troublesome* and *Oppressive* to their *Subjects*, because the worst of *Tyrannies* is better than the best of *Anarchies*; so it must be consistent with the *Sovereignty of the Son* to prevent the *mischiefs* of *Anarchy* in the *Church*, by appointing some *Officers* therein, who should have *Authority* to oblige the *Consciences* of others to *Obedience*, in things conducive to the *Peace* and *Honour* of *his Church*, tho' *he* knew those Men would be *Fallible*, and foresaw that *some* of them would exceed the Bounds of their *Commission*, and cause others to err, and impose some unnecessary Burdens on *their People*, as *Sovereign Princes* sometimes impose unnecessary Taxes upon *their People*. For tho' some part of *his visible Church* might suffer Bondage by *Ecclesiastical Tyranny*, the whole of it (without a Miracle) would be utterly dissolv'd by that *Anarchy* which would arise from the dissolution of *all Ecclesiastical Powers*. In respect therefore of the *Sovereignty* of the *Son of God*, the *Community of Believers* must be obliged not only to receive *Christ* as their *King*, but to submit themselves to *any Form* of *external Government*, which *he* as the *Son of God* should appoint over them. For the *delegation of Power* is a *Branch* of *Sovereignty*, no ways detrimental to the *Root*, but rather beneficial and ornamental to it. And as *Societies*, altogether founded upon *Revelation*, can claim *no other Privileges*, than *Revelation* bestows upon them, so the *Privileges* and *Immunities* of the *visible Church*, must be found as they lie scattered thro' *all the Books* of the *new Testament*, and not as they are thought deducible from *one single Text* perverted and misapplied by *one single Writer*.

It is probable that about the Time of *Christ's Appearance* in the World, the greatest part of the *Jews* who believed the

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Promiſes of a *Meſſiah*, did believe that the *Meſſiah* would erect an *Earthly* and *viſible Monarchy*, according to Biſhop *Hoadly*'s Doctrine. But no ſooner was *the Virgin* Mary *found with Child by the Holy Ghoſt*, but *Her Spouſe* Joſeph was admoniſhed by an *Angel* from *Heaven*, that *That which was conceived within her, was of the Holy Ghoſt*, and that *he* ſhould call his *Name* Jeſus, becauſe *he* ſhould *ſave his People from their Sins*, Now the *ſaving People from their Sins*, being undertaken for no other end, but for the bringing them into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, it is plain that *Chriſt's Kingdom* was not to be in *this World*, wherein no Man is *totally ſaved* either from *Sin*, or *Puniſhment* (in as much as *in many things we all Offend*) and all of us bear ſome part of the *Puniſhment* of our *Fore father's Sins*, but it muſt be in *Heaven*, where *Sin* and *Miſery* are no more.

The like manifeſtation was made to the *Virgin Mary* concerning the *Bleſſed Jeſus* (Luk. 1. 31.) *Thou ſhalt bring forth a Son, and ſhalt call his Name* Jeſus (32.) *He ſhall be great, and ſhall be called the Son of the higheſt, and the Lord God ſhall give unto him the Throne of his Father David.* (33.) *And he ſhall reign over the Houſe of* Jacob *for ever, and of his Kingdom there ſhall be no end.* The *Kingdom* therefore of *Chriſt* could not be a *Kingdom upon Earth*, becauſe *all Kingdoms upon Earth* muſt have an End, when the *Earth it ſelf* ſhall be *conſumed with Fire*; and the *Throne of David*, and the *houſe of Jacob*, could not be the *Subjects* of *Chriſt's Dominion* in *this preſent World*, becauſe *David* is dead, and the *Houſe of Jacob* in a ſtate of unbelief, excepting thoſe few of *them* who ſhall by *Faith* enter into *his everlaſting Kingdom*, over theſe only can he be ſaid to *reign for ever.*

The like Revelation was made to *Elizabeth* the *Couſin* of *Mary*, to *Zacharias*, John *the Baptiſt*, Anna *the Propheteſs*, the *Shepherds* in the Field, the *Pious Simeon*, &c. But to none of them was it revealed that *Chriſt* had a *Kingdom in this World*, wherein none was to act but *himſelf*, for that is impoſſible to be done even by *Chriſt himſelf* in *his humane Nature*, ſince (as the Apoſtle argues) Men could not become *his Subjects* but by *Believing*, they could not *Believe* without *Hearing*, they could not *Hear* unleſs ſome were *ſent* to them, and *Chriſt* could not *ſend* his *Apoſtles* to them, without giving them *Authority over the Religion and Conſciences* of their Fellow Creatures. *He that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me.* And *if any City receive you not, ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet againſt that City.* And *it ſhall be more tollerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *than for that City in*

the day of Judgment. The *Wise Men* from the *East* had but an imperfect Idea of *Christ's Kingdom*, when *they* came to salute *him* as *King of the Jews*; and *Herod* a very false one, when he *slew all the Children* of the Jews, in hopes to destroy their *King*. But *they* who by *Divine Inspiration* knew *him* to be the *Son of God*, did not therefore revolt from the *Law* of *Moses*, or their *subjection* to the *Roman Empire*, because a *greater than* Moses, or *Cæsar* was there, but patiently paid a *due Obedience* to *both* of them, prepared to submit to *any Form* of *Government*, which the *Son of God* should set up in this World, and wait for their Reward in another.

We read, Mat. 3. 2. that John *the Baptist came preaching in the Wilderness, and saying* Μετανοεῖτε ἤγγικε γὰρ ἡ Βασιλεία τ̃ ὐρανῶν. he does not say τ̃ Ἰησ̃, or τ̃ Θεσ̃, which the *Penmen* of the *Holy Scriptures* allways taught to be in *Heaven*, but τ̃ ὐρανῶν, whereby *Christ* always, or most frequently expressed the *whole state* of the *Gospel Oeconomy* upon *Earth*, brought down from *Heaven* by the *Son of Man*, for the *Glory* of the *Father*, and the *Holy Ghost*, as well as for the manifestation of the *Glory* of the *Son*. For no Man in his Senses can deny, that Christians, in their *Baptism*, become the *Covenanted Subjects* of the *Father*, and the *Spirit*, as they become the *Covenanted Servants* of the *Blessed Jesus*; and therefore a Μετάνοια, or *change* of their old *Opinions*, and *Prejudices* was to be made, whereby the *Jews* were inclined to worship the *Godhead* as *one Person*, whereas in Truth the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, had an *equal demand* upon the *Obedience* of the *whole Creation*. But *Christ* who best knew the *nature* of *his own Kingdom* (as the *Bishop* well says) gave a sufficient Demonstration, that *he* never designed to set up a *Kingdom* without the *Ministry* of *Men*, who should have, by a *delegated Authority*, a *Power* to oblige the *Consciences* and *Religion* of *Jews* and *Pagans*. For we read *Mat.* 4. 18. that *he* called *Simon Peter* and *Andrew his Brother*, with a Command to *follow him*, and a Promise that *he* would make them *Fishers of Men*; which they never could have been, if the *Men* they had been sent to, had been at liberty to choose *their own Religion*, with safety to their *future State*, because *Peter* and *Andrew* before the miraculous *Descent* of the *Holy Ghost* (*Acts* 2.) were no more than *Fallible Men*, and consequently could have no command over the *Religion*, or *Consciences* of *God's People*; and if they had none, infidelity had been excusable in their *Hearers*, according to *Bishop Hoadly's Doctrine*; *no Man* (in the *Gospel State* which was then begun) being *Authorized* to make *Decisions* of *Faith* for *another*, whether they happen to agree with those of *Christ*, or to differ

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from them. If indeed *these two*, and the other *Apoſtles* had been called by *Chriſt*, to be always preſent with *him*, then there might have been ſome ground for the *Biſhop's* Doctrine, "That in *Chriſt's Kingdom*, there were to be no *Deputies*, or "*Vice-gerents* who could be *properly* ſaid to ſupply *his Place*," there being little uſe of them, in the Preſence of ſo great a *Sovereign*. But when *theſe Apoſtles*, and the *Seventy Diſciples* inferior to *them*, were to be ſent with the *Credentials* of *caſting out Devils*, and working other Miracles, into all parts of *Judea*, and to ſay (*Luk.* 10. 9.) *The Kingdom of God is come nigh unto you*, and thoſe who *received them not* in the delivery of this Meſſage, were to have *the Duſt of their Feet ſhaken off againſt them*, and to be treated more ſeverely *in the day of Judgment*, than the Inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and were to be inſtructed, that they who *heard* the *Seventy* delivering the *Meſſage* of *Chriſt*, as *he* delivered it to *them*, *heard* (or were *Obedient* to) *Chriſt himſelf*, and he who (ἀθετῶν) ſet aſide, or denied *Belief* of *their Doctrine*, becauſe it came from *Men*, and not *immediately* from *God himſelf*, did not ſo much *deſpiſe* the *Seventy*, as they *deſpiſed*, or were *diſobedient* to the *Son of God*, and to *his Father* which is in *Heaven* (*v.* 16.) then it is plain the *Kingdom* of *Chriſt* upon Earth, was not ſuch a *Monarchy* as was excluſive of *any Vice-gerents*, who might *properly* be ſaid to *ſupply his Place* in his Abſence, provided they ſpoke the *Truth*, tho' they were not at that Time *Omniſcient*, nor *Infallible* in *all Things*. It is ſaid, (*v.* 17.) that *the Seventy returned with Joy*, for the good ſucceſs they found in the *Preaching* of the Goſpel, *ſaying*, καὶ τὰ δαιμόνια, *and the Devils are ſubject to us in thy Name*. That is, "not only the *Men*, "to whom we were ſent, have gladly received the *good Tid-* "*ings* of the *Goſpel*, but thoſe *evil Spirits*, over whom thou "haſt given us Power, for a Teſtimony of a *Divine Miſſion*, "were compelled to obey our Commands, in quitting the "poſſeſſion of Humane Bodies.

But if thoſe *Jews* to whom the *Seventy* were ſent, had been of true *Bangorian Principles*, the *Seventy* muſt have returned rather with *great Grief* and *Shame*, than with *Joy* and *Gladneſs*, to their *Lord* and *Maſter*. For ought not they to have anſwered the *Seventy* in almoſt the very ſame Words with the *Biſhop* of *Bangor*, viz. "You come here to tell us that *the* "*Kingdom of God is at hand*, by this *Kingdom* you mean the "*Kingdom of Chriſt*, wherein *Chriſt himſelf* is *King*, and in "this it is implied, that *he* is *himſelf* the *ſole Lawgiver* to *his* "*Subjects*, *himſelf* the *ſole Judge* of *their Behavior*. But *he* is

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" abſent, and at a great Diſtance from us. There is no *viſible*,
" no *Humane Authority*, no *Vice-gerents*, who can be ſaid *pro-*
" *perly* to ſupply *his Place*. As for *you*, *you* are but *weak, fallible*
" *Men*, and tho' *you* call your ſelves *Deputies*, *Vice-gerents*, or
" *Apoſtles*, and ſometimes *caſt out Devils*, and *heal Diſeaſes*,
" and ſay *you* come from *him*, yet as *he* is *ſole Legiſlator*, and
" *ſole King* in *his Kingdom*, if *you* pretend to make *new Laws*,
" or interpret the *old ones*, *you* make *yourſelves Kings* in *his*
" *Kingdom*, and *we* ſhould be *Traytors* and *Rebels*, if *we* ſhould
" believe *any of your Deciſions*, or obey *any of your Directions*.
" Go home, and fetch *your Maſter*. We have an *immediate*
" *Regard* to *him*. If the *unclean Spirits* are ſo fooliſh as to be-
" come ſubject to *your Commands*, in the *Name* of the *Bleſſed*
" *Jeſus*, do not think that *we* are not better inſtructed in the
" *Nature* of *Chriſt's Kingdom*, than the Inhabitants of the
" *Kingdom of Darkneſs*. Whatever *Power* you have over
" *Diſeaſes*, or *unclean Spirits*, you can have no *Power* over the
" *Conſciences* of *Chriſt's Subjects*, you can have nothing to do,
" to *Judge*, *Puniſh* or *Cenſure*, *another Man's Servants*. *He* has
" told ſome of you, that *he* would make you *Fiſhers of Men*,
" but the *Men* you catch are like *Fiſhes* which are not *your*
" *own*, but *your Maſters*, when they are in the *Net*, you muſt
" uſe no *Force* or *Flattery*, to keep them in it, but let them
" *ſwim* wherever *their own Fancies* will lead them. Go fetch
" *your Maſter*, we are not in haſte for the *Deciſion* of *Contro-*
" *verſies*, we will ſtay till *he* comes in *Perſon*.

Now what could one of the *Seventy* ſay to theſe *Scepticks*, which a *Regular Miniſter* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church* may not ſay to a *modern Bangorian*. Is *Chriſt corporally abſent* from him? ſo he was from the *Seventy*. Did *he* give *miraculous Powers* to the *Seventy*? and has *he* not given to him a *Faith* founded upon the *ſame Miracles*, with the addition of many more to be preached to all Nations? Were the *Jews* bound to *hear Chriſt* as preached by the *Seventy Vice-gerents* ſent in *his Name*? and is there not the ſame Obligation upon *Chriſtians* of *our Times*, to hear the *Vice-gerents* of *Chriſt*, who deliver his Meſſage truly to them, tho' the *one* teſtified *their Vice-gerency* by *Miracles*, the *other* by *regular Succeſſion*, and *Impoſition of Hands*, appointed by *Chriſt* and *his Apoſtles*, as the *proper Means* of the tranſmiſſion of *Vice-gerency* from one Generation to another? Were the *Jews* bound to liſten to the *Seventy* tho' *they* had not *all the Power* of *their Maſter*? And are the *Bangorians* exempted from *all Obedience* to the *Guides* and *Rulers* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, when they teach and preach

things agreeable to the Will of Chriſt, who is the *Truth*, the *Way*, and the *Life*, for the very ſame Reaſon, when *Chriſt* ſays expreſly, *it ſhall be more tolerable for* Sodom *and* Gomorroh *in the Day of Judgment*, than *for ſuch kind of Chriſtians.*

But I hope the *Biſhop* and *his Friends* will give me leave to draw theſe few *apparent Concluſions* from the above mentioned *Scriptures.*

1*ſt.* That the *Kingdom of God*, which the *Apoſtles*, and the *Seventy* preached to the *Jews*, was not a *Kingdom* to be managed without *Vice-gerents* armed with *their Maſter's Authority*, to command the *Aſſent* of the *Jews* ſo far as *their Commiſſion* extended.—— *I will make you Fiſhers of Men.* —— *Jeſus appointed other Seventy alſo, and ſent them two and two before his Face* —— *whither he himſelf would come.* (Luk. 10. 1.)

2*d.* Tho' *Chriſt* was as really *abſent in Body* from the *Places He* ſent them to, as he is now from us who live at preſent, yet the *Places He* ſent them to were obliged to receive the *Meſſage He* ſent by thoſe *Seventy Officers*, and faithfully delivered by them, with as much *Submiſſion* of their *Wills* and *Underſtandings*, as if *Himſelf* had been *corporally Preſent.*

3*d.* That the *Miracles* wrought by the *Seventy*, (in *caſting out Devils*, &c.) being only for the Manifeſtation of *their Miſſion* from *Him* by *extraordinary Powers*: Wherever the *Miniſters of Chriſt* can ſhew an *equal Manifeſtation* in an *ordinary Manner* derived from *Chriſt* and *His Apoſtles*, and deliver a *true Meſſage* to *their Hearers*, (ſuppoſe the very ſame the *Seventy* delivered) there is the ſame *Danger* in rejecting *their Teſtimony*, as there would be in rejecting the *Teſtimony* of *Chriſt Himſelf*, if *He* were *Corporally Preſent.* For *Chriſt's Promiſe* to *His Apoſtles* was, that *He would be with them to the End of the World*, which muſt be underſtood as made to *their Succeſſors*, becauſe *none of them* was to live ſo long. And if *none* after the *Apoſtles* Times had an *apparent Authority* to preach *Chriſt Crucified*, *none* could lie under an *apparent Neceſſity* of *Believing* on *Him*; which is very near to the bidding adieu to the *Chriſtian Religion. How ſhall they Preach* (with *Authority* to command *Aſſent*) *unleſs they be ſent?* ſays the *Biſhop's* old Antagoniſt St. *Paul.*

4*th.* When the *Seventy* were ſent out by *Chriſt*, *Their Fallibility* in ſome Things, was no obſtruction to the *Certainty* of *Their Meſſage*, That *Jeſus* was *the true Meſſiah*, neither did the *Jews* who believed *their Deciſſion* of that *grand Article* of the *Chriſtian Faith*, make *them Uſurpers* upon the *Throne of Chriſt.* For then *they* would not have returned *with Joy* to *their Maſter*, but rather with ſuch *Grief* and *Indignation*, as were

were ſhewed by *Paul* and *Barnabas*, when the *Pagans* would have ſacrificed to *them* as *Gods*, becauſe *they* did *greater Miracles*, than could be done by Men. So far were the *Men of that Age* from thinking, that *all Deceſſions* of *Articles of Faith*, made in the *Corporal Abſence* of *Chriſt*, were *Intruſions* upon *His Regal Office*, and Tantamount to ſo many *Dethronizations* of *Him*; or that *none* but *Chriſt in Perſon*, could give *any one Deciſive Article of Faith* to the *Chriſtian Church*, which could oblige the *Conſcience* of the *Hearers* to *Aſſent*.

5*th*. It is evident that if *Chriſt* had continued till this very Day in the Fleſh, *He* muſt either have had *no Subjects* at all, or, thoſe *few only* who actually heard *Him* preach, if *He* had not made uſe of *Fallible Men*, for the *publication* of *His glorious Goſpel and Government*. For how ſhould the Inhabitants of *Great Britain* have been obliged to have received *Him* whom they had never heard, nor never ſeen, but by the *Miniſtry* of *Agents*, or *Vice-gerents*, who in *His Name* could command *their Aſſent*, under the Penalty of *Eternal Damnation*? For ſuppoſe *He* had ſent none but *Inſpir'd Apoſtles* to them, endued with the *Power* of working *Miracles*; yet neither would *their Inſpiration*, nor *their wonder-working Powers* have rendred them *Infallible in all Things*, nor *Impeccable in any*, but only *certain* of the *Truth* of the *Things inſpir'd*, and *Conſcious of their own Sincerity* in delivering *faithfully their Meſſage*, as *they* received it from *their Lord* and *Maſter*. For *Certainty* differs as much from *Infallibility*, as to *know in part*, and *ſee in part*, differs from *Omniſciency* and *Omnipotency*, for which I will appeal to the *Biſhop himſelf*, who will acknowledge *himſelf* a *Fallible Man*, yet delivers *his Doctrines* with as *high an Air* of Aſſurance, as a *Biſhop* of *Rome*, or a *General Council*, and talks as much of *Demonſtration*, both in *Theology* and *Politicks*, as if he thought *all humane* and *divine Knowledge* was *intirely his own*. And I will ſay this to *his Honour*, That no Man in *Polemical Divinity* would draw a *ſtronger Bow*, if *he* did not ſeem ſometimes too much delighted with the *Parthian Dexterity* of ſhooting Backwards.

But to return to my former Purpoſe, if *we Britons* ſhould have been obliged to have been under the *Government* of *Chriſt's Apoſtles*, if *Himſelf* had been ſtill alive at *Jeruſalem*, or elſe muſt have continued in *Subjection* to the *Idolatrous Superſtitions* of our *Anceſtors*, and after our *Converſion* to *Chriſtianity*, muſt have been in a *State of Rebellion* to *Chriſt*, if we had ſubmitted our *Conſciences* to *any Laws of Men*, for the *Regulation* of the *Publick Worſhip*, or the *Prevention* of *notorious Scandals*;

cauſe *all Men* are in ſome things *Fallible*; then *we Britons* who are now alive muſt be obliged to receive the *ſame Goſpel* from *thoſe* who are ſent to *us*, in ſuch a manner as *Chriſt* and *his Apoſtles* ordained for *their miſſion*, and to receive the *diſcipline* of *fallible Men*, ſince no others are ſent to us, or we muſt totally reject both of them. For if we are obliged to hear none but *Chriſt*, and *Chriſt* ſays nothing to us, and has left us no *Vice-gerents* who can be ſaid *properly* to *ſupply his Place*, it is plain we are obliged to believe nothing.

If the *Biſhop* ſays we hear *Chriſt* ſpeaking in the *Scriptures*. I anſwer, the Scriptures were not penn'd by *Chriſt*, but by *his Apoſtles*, who ſpake as *his Vice-gerents*, which ſhews that *all Vice-gerency* is ſo far from being *deſtructive* to what *he* calls *Chriſt's Kingdom upon Earth*, that it was *Eſſential* to the very firſt Formation of it.

If *he* ſays, that the *Authority* of *Chriſt* and *his Apoſtles*, was *one Authority*, as proceeding from *one Spirit*. I ſay that the *Apoſtles* and the *Seventy* were the *Vice-gerents* of *Chriſt* before the *miraculous Deſcent* of the *Holy Spirit* upon them. And *their delivery* of what *Chriſt* had ſaid to *them*, was as *obligatory* to the *Jews* of *Chorazin* and *Bethſadia*, as if *Chriſt* had ſpoken to them, and in delivering faithfully what *Chriſt* ſaid to *them*, *they* were *properly his Vice-gerents*, and *ſupplied his Place*.

And I will ſay farther, that it is as true, that *whatever Truths* the *ordinary Miniſters* of the *Goſpel*, who can prove *their Miſſion*, do deliver to *their Hearers*, whether by *Synodical Deciſions*, or by *ſingle predications*, *their Auditors* are as much obliged in Conſcience to Believe, as if *himſelf* was preſent, for *his Words*, and *his Senſe* is there, tho' *his Body* is in *Heaven*. To which I will add, that *whatever Laws* are made by *Men* agreeable to the *Laws of Chriſt*, they do oblige the *Conſciences* of the *Members* of a *Chriſtian Church*, or elſe the *Church* of *Chriſt* is in a *perfect State of Anarchy*.

Nor does it much alter the Caſe, if the *Perſons* making *theſe Laws* or *Deciſions* do chalenge an *abſolute* and *indiſpenſable Submiſſion* or no, (as the *Biſhop* ſpeaks, p. 13.) provided they chalenge it as the *Agents* or *Vice-gerents* of *Chriſt*, and can ſhew a *Commiſſion* from *Chriſt*, for ſuch a Chalenge. As *Chriſt* is the *Fountain of all Power* both in *Heaven* and *Earth*, *he* might have put us under whatever *Powers* had beſt pleaſed *him*; and our quarrels with the *Popes* and their *pretended Councils*, is not for chalenging an *indiſpenſable Submiſſion* to their *Laws*, or *Canons* which are *True* and *Juſt* (for ſo far they carry an *Obligation* both in *Form* and *Matter* with them)

but for *claiming thoſe Powers*, without being able to ſhew a *Commiſſion* from *Heaven* for them. *The fullneſs of the Godhead* which *dwelt bodily* in our *Saviour* upon Earth, and remains with *him* to all Eternity, could have conſtituted the *Biſhops of* Rome, the *ſole Governors* of the *Chriſtian Church*, and have inſpired them with *Knowledge* equal to ſo great a Charge; or, might have endewed *General Councils*, with the like *Authority*, without any *Dethronization* of *Chriſt*, provided they had acknowledged themſelves as *his Agents*. But if they ſhew no ſuch *Commiſſion* from *Chriſt*, and there may be ten Thouſand Arguments produced to ſhew that no ſuch was given to either, therefore we reject them as *meer Pretenders* to an *infallible Spirit*. But if either of them could produce *ſufficient Credentials* from *Heaven* for that *ſuper-eminent Authority* which they claim in the *Church* of *Chriſt*, or ſhould make *authoritative Deciſions* agreeable to *his Laws*, *all Men* would be obliged to ſubmit as if *Chriſt himſelf* was *corporally Preſent*, for *he* is there *virtually*, in that Declaration of his *Will* which *he* left behind *him*.

Upon *this Principle* it is, that the admirable Dr. *Barrow* argues againſt the *papal Supremacy*, ſhewing that *Chriſt* never gave St. *Peter* a *Supremacy* over *his other Apoſtles*, that the *Scriptures* never teach ſuch a *Sovereignty* was to deſcend by *Hereditary Right* to *his Succeſſors*, and that the *Biſhops* of Rome can't prove from *Scripture* or *Antiquity*, that they are the *Succeſſors* of that *great Apoſtle*. But Dr. *Barrow* never would have ſaid, as the *Biſhop* ſeems to ſay, that if *Chriſt* had given *him* a *general Commiſſion*, of *Vice-gerency* tho' *he* a cknowledged *himſelf* to be no more than *Chriſt's Agent*, or *Vice-gerent* (p. 13.) would have made him *abſolutely* our *King*; for *all Agency* and *Vice-gerency* are known to be *dependant Powers*, as *Independency* and *Omniſciency* are the *eſſential Attributes* of the *Divine Nature*.

In what Words therefore can we explain that very *Explanation* of the ſenſe of ſome Words in *his Sermon*, which the *Biſhop* gives us, (*p.* 13.) he ſays, " The *ſole deſign* of it, is to " ſhew, that whoſoever he be to whom your ſubmiſſion is " *indiſpenably* and *abſolutely* due, whether he calls himſelf an " *Agent* under another, whether he happens to give you a " *Law* agreeable to that *other*, or not; if you are obliged " *abſolutely* to obey it, as it comes from *him*, without com- " paring it with the *Will* of the *other*; *he* is your *King* truly " and properly whoſe *Authority* you are in that manner " obliged to ſubmit to; and not that *other*, who neither di-

" reſts

" reſts *him*, nor upon this ſuppoſition, is at all regarded by " *you*.

Upon which Words, I make theſe brief Obſervations.

1. They had been much more intelligible, if the *Biſhop* had plainly ſaid, *all thoſe* who make *any Deciſions* of *matters* of *Faith*, or *Canons* to direct the *Worſhip* or *Practiſe*, are *Revolters* from *Chriſt*, and to be treated as *Rebels* in *his ſpiritual Kingdom*. Or elſe plainly to have declared, that *he* had no ſuch meanings, but that *Submiſſion* and *Obedience* was due to *Eccleſiaſtical Laws*, and *Conſtitutions*, in all things agreeable to *Truth*, and to the *revealed Will* of our *Lord* and *Maſter*. It is true, the firſt of theſe Forms of Speech, would have been very diſtaſtful to *thoſe Members* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, who believe that they are bound to *ſubmit to every Ordinanse of Man for the Lord's ſake*. The other to *thoſe Proteſtant Diſſenters*, who unhappily think, that *things in themſelves lawful*, become *unlawful* by being *commanded by any*. But a *Chriſtian Biſhop* is not to ſpeak any thing for the Praiſe of *Men*, but for the Praiſe of *God*; and ſuch *ambiguities* of *Speech*, as may lead either *Churchmen*, or *Diſſenters* into Error, are not to be affected by *one*, whoſe Duty it is to preach the *Word of God*, in all *Plaineſs*, and *godly Sincerity*. If the *Convocation* were miſtaken in affixing the firſt Senſe upon his Words, tending to *Anarchy*, he might have done *himſelf* Juſtice in acknowledging the ſecond, which would have juſtified the *Eccleſiaſtical* and *Civil Conſtitutions* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*. But it is plain *he* had no ſuch Deſign, and choſe rather to explain *one obſcurity* by *another*.

2. I obſerve the *Biſhop* in this Book is as unwilling to leave his two darling Words of *Abſolute* and *Indiſpenſable*, as a *Fox* is to quit his *Burrow*, when the *Hounds* are in full Cry at the Mouth of his *Den*. He knows very well, as it has been owned by Mr. *Pyle* and *his other Advocates*, that the Words *Abſolute* and *Indiſpenſable*, ſignify nothing in the preſent Caſe. But they are Words of *two Faces*, and therefore moſt proper for the uſe of thoſe, who love to ſpeak and act in *Maſquerade*. *He* might if he had pleaſed, have told the *Committee*, that *all ſubmiſſion* to *Eccleſiaſtical Laws* and *Deciſions*, was deſtructive of *Chriſt's Kingdom*, as well as that *Abſolute* and *Indiſpenſable* Submiſſion to *any*, calling *themſelves Chriſt's Agents*, was the making thoſe *Agents* their *King*. But then he wiſely foreſaw that *all the Body* of the *Engliſh Clergy*, would have had the faireſt Opportunity imaginable, to have charg-

ed *him* with *his own Submiſſions*, and *Subſcriptions*, which hitherto *he* has not recanted; and that both *Presbyterian*, and *Independant Diſſenters*, would have had the ſame Cauſe of Indignation, for taking away the *Divine Right* of *their Synodical Aſſemblies*, and the *Congregational Powers* of the *Laiety*, to receive, and reject whoſoever they pleaſed into the *Privileges* of *Church Member-ſhip*. But the Word *Abſolute* ſignifying ſometimes *unlimited*, and ſometimes *complete*, or *perfect*; *abſolute Submiſſion* can't be paid to *any* but to *God*, without the higheſt offence imaginable againſt the *Divine Majeſty*. But *abſolute Obedience* as it ſignifies a *Real* or *Complete Submiſſion*, which ſignifies our *doing ſomething*, which otherwiſe we would *not do*, or *ſuffering patiently*, what otherwiſe we would *not ſuffer*, becauſe it is enjoyned by a *ſuperior Authority* of *God's* appointment, is in the *Judgment* of *all Chriſtian Churches*, a *neceſſary Duty*, for *they*, no more than the *Church of England*, could pretend to the Name of *Chriſtian Churches* without it. And yet if the *Biſhop* does not expreſly teach, that the *exacting* of paying *any kind* of ſubmiſſion whatſoever to *Humane Deciſions*, and *Humane Laws*, was in it ſelf Criminal, the *Concluſions* drawn from *Chriſt's ſole Legiſlation*, would be void, and of no Effect, and all the ſtrength of his Argument againſt the *Teſt*, and other *Acts* of *Parliament*, for the ſecurity of *our Church*, (which he owns upon that Account, ought to be repealed) is little better than *Abſolute* and *Indiſpenſable* Nonſenſe. The *Pope himſelf* does not claim *abſolute Submiſſion*, if *Abſolute* ſignifies *Unlimited*, becauſe *all unlimited Power* muſt be *Independant Power*, for every *Power* is limited by that *ſuperior Power* upon which it depends; and conſequently, owns it Limitation to *that Power*, to which it owes its whole *Exiſtence*. And the *Pope* claiming *his Supremacy* (tho' without any Rational Evidence) as the *Vicar* of *Chriſt*, and *Plenipotentiary* upon Earth, cannot in propriety of Speech, be ſaid to claim an *abſolute Power*, tho' he ſhould rant ten times higher than his Predeceſſor *Hildebrand*, becauſe the Terms of *Vicar*, *Deputy*, *Vice-gerent*, and *abſolute Monarch* are incoherent, and inconſiſtent one with another. And it is manifeſt, that neither our *firſt Reformers*, nor our *preſent Convocation*, did ever chalenge *any abſolute Power*, to have *their Laws* obeyed, if contrary to the *Laws of Chriſt*, or *their Deciſions* believed, if contrary to the *Truth*, but to be reſpected as *Vicars* of *Chriſt*, when *they* are declaring *thoſe Truths* upon *Earth*, which *himſelf* and *his Apoſtles* preached, whilſt *they* were reſident here

amongſt

amongſt us; and in this we have no Controverſy, either with *Presbyterians* or *Congregational Diſſenters*.

As for *Indiſpenſable Submiſſion*, there never was any ſuch thing in *Rerum Natura*, nor is it poſſible there ever ſhould be. For *Submiſſion* implies *Obedience* to a *Law*, a *Law* implies an *Authority* to make *that Law*, (which would otherwiſe be a thing *indifferent*) and the *ſame Authority* which made the *Law*, enables the *Lawgiver* to diſpenſe with the Breach of it, or to repeal it when it comes to be inconſiſtent with the *Publick Good*. If we owe *Indiſpenſable Submiſſion* in the ſtricteſt ſignification, it muſt be to *God*. But if *God* did not ſometimes diſpenſe with the *Submiſſion* we owe *him*, no Fleſh living could be ſaved, for as much as *all Forgiveneſs* of Sins is but a Branch of the *diſpenſing Power*. It is true there are *ſome Sins* ſo heinous (as the *Sin againſt the Holy Ghoſt*) that *God* has declared that *he* will not pardon them, that is remit their Puniſhment, either *in this World*, or, in the *World to come*; but Chriſt tells us, all other Sins may be forgiven (upon the Condition of an hearty and ſincere Repentance.) But tho' *Submiſſion* is *diſpenſable*, that is, pardonable by *God*, *all Submiſſion* to the *Divine Will*, is *Indiſpenſable* to Man, for the *Divine Law* makes it a *neceſſary Duty*. And therefore 'tis more agreeable to honeſt Sincerity, to tell *Men*, that *God* has forbidden us to pay *any ſubmiſſion* at all, to the *Laws of Men*, be they good, or bad, than to tell them, that the owning an *Indiſpenſable ſubmiſſion* to the very beſt of *their Laws*, or the trueſt of *their Deciſions*, is High Treaſon againſt the *Kingdom* of *Heaven*, or MAKING ANOTHER KING.

3. I obſerve, that when the *Biſhop* adds thoſe alleviating Words to this Doctrine, [*without comparing it with the Will of the other*] that is, of *God*, and *his Chriſt*, and ſays, "He ſpeaks "nothing againſt thoſe *Deciſions* of Men, which are found, "upon Conſideration, to be agreeable to the *Will* of *Chriſt*," *He* is ſo far from taking away the ſuſpicion of a tendency to *Anarchy*, that *he* fully and clearly eſtabliſhes the *Anarchical Principles*, as the foundation of the *Chriſtian Religion*, or, at leaſt the greateſt *Beauty* and *Perfection* of it. For to what Purpoſe is it, to give Men leave to conſider, whether theſe *Humane Laws*, or *Deciſions*, are good, or bad, true, or falſe, when they are prepoſſeſſed with an Opinion, that it is no matter whether they be good, or bad, true, or falſe, ſince they muſt be rejected from the *Kingdom* of *Chriſt*, as they are *Humane Conſtitutions*, and conſequently deſtructive of the *ſole Legiſlation* of their *Lord* and Maſter? There is no great need

need of *Conſideration*, where *Truth* and *Juſtice*, have nothing to do in the *Determination*.

But the whole ſtreſs of the Conteſt depends upon *Authority* conſidered in its moſt abſtracted Notion. If *God* has given no *Authority* to Men, to make *Laws* in what the *Biſhop* calls *Chriſt's Kingdom*, *all Canons* and *Acts of Parliament* ought to be repealed; *all Diſſenters* from our *Church*, and from all other *Chriſtian Churches* (for all have ſome *Humane Conſtitutions* in them) ought to be encourged; and thoſe Names of *Superiority*, which *Pufendorfe* calls *moral entities*, as carrying in their Front ſome demands of *Submiſſion* from *Inferiors*, ſuch as the Names of *King*, *Emperor*, *Senate*, &c. ought to be aboliſhed. If *Chriſt* has forbidden *his Miniſters* to make *any Deciſions in the matters of Faith*, whether true, or falſe, the *Acts* of *all General Councils* ought to be burnt, the *Articles* of our own Church ought to be Partakers of the ſame Condemnation; nay *all Authorative Preaching* to be prohibited, for therein the *Preacher* decides many controverted Points of Faith, as *one* having an *Authority* from *Chriſt* to do it; and none but the *Silent Meetings* of the *Quakers*, will be found conſiſtent with the *ſole Legiſlation* of *Chriſt* our *King*; for in them there is no *Authoritative Preaching*, no *Deciſions* of *matters of Faith*, no reading of the *Thirty Nine Articles*, no *Authoritative Bleſſings*, no *Humane Liturgies*, no *Authoritative Abſolutions*, nor any *Impoſition* upon the *Conſciences* of *Chriſt's People*, unleſs the *Impoſition* of a *long Silence* upon the *Talkative Sex*, ſhould be eſteemed as ſuch, by ſome *fierce Aſſertors* of *Chriſtian Liberty*.

This *Anarchy* muſt be the true *State* of *Chriſt's Kingdom* upon *Earth*, if the owning *Indiſpenſable Submiſſion* to juſt and good *Laws*, is inconſiſtent with the *ſole Legiſlation* of *Chriſt* our Saviour. For that takes away our Obligation to *all Humane Conſtitutions*, not only in *our own*, but in all *Chriſtian Churches*, which ever have been, or ever ſhall be in the World. For whatſoever upon ſerious Conſideration is found to be of *Humane Conſtitution*, ought to be aboliſhed, if it be the *Will* of *Chriſt* that it ſhould be ſo.

But ſince the *whole Will* of *Chriſt* is not to be learned from *one ſingle Text* of *Scripture*, but from the *repeated Teſtimonies* of the *ſacred Writers*; let us proceed in examining the *Scriptures*, whether a *ſtate* of *Anarchy* is agreeable to the *Will* of *Chriſt*, or no. For to ſay that the *Church* of *Chriſt* can't be in a *State* of *Anarchy*, becauſe it is always governed by *Chriſt*, is to ſay nothing. For where there is no *Civil Government*, in

any

any part of the World (as Mr. *Hooker* thinketh there was none before the Flood) there is a *State* of *Anarchy*, tho' *God*, is *King* of the whole Earth, and governs it by his ſecret Providence, as *Chriſt* does *his Church*.

When our *Saviour* went up into the Mountain (*Math.* 5.) *he* was followed by *ſuch Diſciples*, as either by *Divine Revelation* knew *him* to be the *Son of God*, or were convinced of that Truth by the *Miracles* they ſaw *him* do in *Perſon*, (when *Mat.* 4. 23.) *he went about all Galilee, teaching in their Synagogues---- and healing all manner* of *ſickneſs*; or by *ſuch*, as were converted by the *Miniſtry* of *his Apoſtles*, who were ſent out *his Agents*, to ſummon the *Jews* to their attendance upon their long expected *Meſſiah*. All theſe muſt be preſumed to know, that *all Power in Heaven* and *Earth* was due the Dignity of *his Perſon*, as the *Son* of the *Living God*, and tho' ſome of them, before the Deſcent of the *Holy Ghoſt*, might have ſo mean a Thought of *him*, as to think *he* came to claim a *Kingdom* on *Earth*, yet after that, they were all fully convinced, that his deſign of coming into this World, was to teach Men the way to his *Kingdom* in *Heaven*. And therefore they did not in this *Infancy* of the *Church*, call *Chriſt* their *King* and themſelves his *Subjects*, but they call themſelves *Diſciples*, and *Chriſt* their *Teacher*, or, τὸν Διδάσκαλον, their *Maſter*, or *Chief Inſtructor*. For they plainly ſaw that *Chriſt* did not *reign* upon *Earth*, becauſe a *King* is ſaid there only to *Reign*, where he is actually inveſted with the Power of *Rewards* and *Puniſhments*, and not there where he gives his *Laws*, which may be done in a Nation not ſubject to his *Dominions*. But *Chriſt* diſdaining to chalenge to *himſelf* any of the *Powers* of this World (who *made me a Ruler, or Judge amongſt you*) *went up into the Mount to* teach *his Diſciples* the way to *his Kingdom* in *Heaven*, where *he* actually rewards *his Followers* with eternal Glory. *His Diſciples* who knew the dignity of *his Perſon*, did not from thence inferr like Biſhop *Hoadly*, That *ſole Legiſlation*, was the neceſſary Conſequence of *his Kingly Office*, for then they muſt have revolted from their *Obedience* to the *Law* of *Moſes*, and their *Subjection* to the *Roman Empire*, which *Chriſt* expreſly forbad them to do. (Mat. 5. 17.) *Think not that I am come to deſtroy the Law, or the Prophets, I am not come to deſtroy, but to fulfill.* He taught them ſuch *Laws*, as have little or no Influence upon the *Happineſs* of this *preſent Life*, but are preparatory for a *future State*, by a *natural Tendency* to create *Happineſs* to the Souls of Men, without the *additional Helps* of *worldly Pomp* and *Glory*. And

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it is remarkable too, that *all thoſe ſocial Vertues*, which *Chriſt* preſcribes as *Conditions* of *Eternal Salvation*, which have a *tendency* towards the making Men live peaceably among themſelves, are alſo *Eccleſiaſtical Vertues* tending towards the making Men *dutiful Subjects* to *Governors* that ſhould be ſet over them by *Chriſt* their Lord.

Bleſſed (ſaith Chriſt ver. 3.) *are the poor in Spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.* We all know that *Humility*, as oppoſed to *Pride*, and *Self-conceitedneſs*, inclines Men to the *ſubmiſſion* of their *Judgments* to *others* in *Abilities* or *Authority* ſuperior to them. But *Pride* and *Self-conceitedneſs*, inclines the Ignorant to deſire *Dominion* over the *Wiſe*, the *Subject* over his *Prince*, the *Man* that is to be *taught* in the Word, over *him* that is *appointed* to *teach*, and that it is impoſſible to *teach* a *Proud Man*, any thing which *he* is not willing to *learn*. If therefore the *Pride* of a Man, refuſing to ſubmit his *Judgment* to his *ſpiritual Guides*, when they teach him the *Truth*, will excuſe him at the *Day* of *Judgment*, becauſe he is *ſincerely* (that is, intirely) of an *Opinion*, contrary to all *his ſpiritual Teachers*, then *Pride*, and *Self-conceitedneſs* are *ſurer Ways* to the *Kingdom* of *Heaven*, than *Humility*, or *Poverty of Spirit*. Whereas it was the Opinion of St. *James*, that *God reſiſteth* (that is, does not give his Grace to) *the Proud, but giveth Grace to the humble.* (Jam. 4. 6.) And *Chriſt* ſaith, *He that ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be abaſed, and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted.* (Mat. 23. 12.)

Our Saviour ſaith (ver. 5.) *Bleſſed are the Meek, for they ſhall inherit the Earth. Meekneſs* is that *Vertue*, whereby we are enabled ſo to govern the *Paſſion* of *Anger*, that it may not be prejudicial to our *Neighbours*, nor obſtructive of our *Charity*, or *Juſtice* to them, and therefore inclines us to paſs by *little Grievances*, rather than ſeek *legal Reparations*, and patiently bear the *Affronts* and *Indignities* of *Superiors*, than caſt off *all due ſubjection* to them. And if *Meekneſs* inclines us to deal ſo with *Private Men*, much more ought we to deal ſo with *Superiors*, and eſpecially *thoſe* who are *ſet over us in the Lord.* For as a Man cannot without ſome Degree of *Meekneſs* be a *fit Member* of *Humane Society*, ſo neither can a *Chriſtian* be a *good Member* of any *viſible Church* upon Earth, without being endewed with ſome Degrees of *Meekneſs*, to bear ſome imagined *Grievances*, pardon ſome *Humane Frailties*, overlook ſome little *Deficiencies*, and put a *favourable Interpretation* upon ſome *ambiguous Expreſſions*, rather than diſturb the *Peace* and *Tranquility* of the *Chriſtian Church.*

Chriſt

Chriſt ſays, (ver. 4.) *Bleſſed are they that mourn, for they ſhall be comforted*, that is, they who are *grieved* for their *Sins*, or the *Puniſhments* their *Sins* have brought upon them, when ſuch *godly ſorrow* bringeth forth *Repentance not to be repented of*. As this *vertuous Diſpoſition* of *Mind* has always a *Tendency* towards the Reformation of a Man's Life and Converſation, for as much as *in many things we offend all*, ſo it has a more *particular Influence* upon *thoſe Sinners*, who have fallen under the *Cenſures* of the *Church* for broaching *Erroneous Doctrines*, or falling into *ſcandalous Sins*, unworthy of their *Chriſtian Profeſſion*. Inſomuch that the very *Act* of *Excommunication*, and the *Effects* of it, are by St. *Paul* called by the Name of *Mourning*, (1 Cor. 5. 1, 2.) *It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and ſuch fornication, as is not ſo much as named amongſt the* Gentiles, *that one ſhould have his Father's Wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather* Mourned, *that he that hath done this Deed, might be taken away from among you.* But if Men are taught, as the *Biſhop* teaches, that *Excommunication does not all affect us as to our future State*, or the *favour of God*, that the *ſpiritual State* of the *inceſtuous* Corinthian, was not the worſe for being under the *cenſure* of the *Church*, nor the *entrance* of *Satan* into *him*, any *mark* of *God's diſpleaſure*, then there was no occaſion for the *Corinthians* to *Mourne* over the *Perſon* thus to be *cenſured*, nor *any motive* in the *Cenſure*, to bring that *inceſtuous* Corinthian to ſorrow, which might end in amendment of his Life, and *Converſation*. According to the *Biſhop's* Scheme of *Church Diſcipline*, the *Criminal* ought rather to have *laughed* at St. *Paul's* Sentence, as a *Trifle*, and a *Nullity*, than have been at all concerned at it, ſince it was not inflicted by *Chriſt*, but by one of *his Apoſtles*, and the *more immediate Regard* a Man has to *Chriſt*, the *leſs* will he *regard* the *Judgment* of *Men*. But if Men be taught that no one has *Authority* to puniſh them in this World for their moſt *ſcandalous Offences*, then the Exerciſe of *all Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline* is turned into matter of *Banter* and *Ridicule*, and it muſt not be ſaid, *Happy are they who Mourne*, but they who can moſt heartily, and ſincerely *laugh* at it, when they fall under the *Cenſures* of the *Church*, for the moſt *enormous Offences*.

Chriſt tell us (v. 6.) *Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after Righteouſneſs, for they ſhall be filled. Righteouſneſs* is the *Deſire of giving every Perſon their due, Honour to whom Honour is due, Tribute to whom Tribute is due, Obedience to whom Obedience*. And therefore he can't be a *Righteous*

Man, who is not desirous to pay *that Obedience* which is due to *Man*, as well as *that* which is due to *God*. For tho' *all Authority* is *Originally* from *God (Thou couldst have no Power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.* Joh. 19. 11.) yet by *Him*, and *his Christ* it must be communicable to *inferior Agents*, or *Vice-gerents* here below, or it would be a *Circumscribed* and *Limited Power*. A *Righteous Man* therefore is desirous of obeying the *Laws of Christ* as the *Laws* of *Christ*; the *Canons* of his *Church*, as the *Canons* of a *Body* of *Christians*, impowered to make *Laws* agreeable to *Christ*'s *Laws*, and *Decisions* in *Matters* of *Faith*, agreeable to the *Truth*, which *Christ* and *His Apostles* taught upon Earth; *Acts* of *State*, as *Acts* of *State* made by *Magistrates* impowered from above, to secure themselves against *Anarchy*, and *Enthusiasme*, and the dangerous *Principles* of some *Religionists* by *Temporal Rewards* and *Punishments*; the Exercise of the *Royal Supremacy* (which the *Bishop* says *he does not understand)* in *Matters* and *Causes Ecclesiastical* as a *Royal Prerogative*, to enjoy that *Humane Part* of *Jurisdiction* which our *Laws* have annexed to the *British Crown*. But he must never pretend to *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, who will advance *Principles*, which, under a Pretence of *Christ's sole Legislation*, shall overthrow *all the Canons* of the *Church*, Good and Bad, False and True, take away from the *Civil Magistrate*, the Distribution of *Temporal Rewards*, or *Punishments*, and from the *Crown* that Part of *Jurisdiction* which himself has acknowledged to be but due.

Christ saith (ver. 7.) *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy*. *Mercy* is that *Vertue* whereby we are inclinable to succour *those*, who labour under any *want* or *Misery*. This *kind Disposition* ought to be in all Men, but especially in *those* who are *rich*, or, who are placed in any eminent Degree of *Power*, or *Authority*. Now as it is a sign of an *unmerciful Temper*, to inflict *greater Punishments* even upon the *Guilty*, than the necessity of *publick Justice* does require, so also is it *unmerciful* to spoil the *Innocent* of those *defensive Weapons*, which are necessary to preserve *them* from the *Rage* and *Fury* of those *Adversaries*, who do not deny but that it is their desire, as soon as they are able, to destroy them. It is like a *Generals* commanding his *Soldiers* to lay down their *Arms*, when there is an *Enemy* in view, who never yet vouchsafed to give them *free Quarter*.

Christ saith (ver. 8.) *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. By the *Heart*, the Scriptures understand the *Inward Man*, viz. the *Understanding*, *Will*, and *Affections*. By the

Purity

Purity of the Heart, we underſtand the *Moral Rectitude* of *theſe Faculties*, without the mixture of *ſinful Thoughts*, and *Inclinations*. For as the *Soul* was at firſt made after the *Image of God*, in *Holineſs*, and *Purity of Spirit*, but fell from that *happy State* by ſinful Pollutions; ſo, then the *Soul* can only be ſaid to be *pure*, when it regains as much of that Conformity of it ſelf to the *Divine Will* in *all Things*, as is conſiſtent with her preſent imperfect *State*, and *Condition*. But I would not have the *Reader* think, that the *Biſhop's* Notion of *Sincerity*, which gave offence to the *Committee* in *his Preſervative*, and which he defends (pag. 92.) in *his Anſwer*, is that *Purity of Heart*, which will juſtify us in the Eyes of *God*.

The *Committee* laid to his *Charge*, that " *He* makes *all* " *Church Communion* unneceſſary, in order to intitle Men to " the *Favour* of *God*, and that *he* refers *every Man* in thoſe " Caſes to his *private Judgment*, as that which will juſtify " even the worſt Choice he can make. " I have not *his Preſervative* by me, nor have I any Inclinations at preſent to meddle with that *new Scheme* of *Chriſtian Theology*. But I preſume the *Biſhop's Doctrine* there is, " that *every Man* muſt be " the *Judge* of what Communion he ought to chooſe, and af- " ter his utmoſt Endeavours to *Judge* rightly, he will be " juſtified by the *Sincerity* of his Private Judgment, tho' he " ſhould happen to be miſtaken in his Choice. " The *Committee* ſay, that " this Notion of *Sincerity* juſtifies a Man in " the *worſt Choice* he can make " that is in chooſing a *Communion* full of the groſſeſt Errours. The *Biſhop* ſays, very pleaſantly, that " his conſtant Doctrine is, that it will juſti- " ty him in the Beſt Choice he can make. " which is the very ſame that is ſaid by the *Committee*; for if it will juſtify him in the *Beſt Choice* he can make, tho' that *Choice* is of a *Communion* full of the groſſeſt Errors, then it juſtifies his *Choice* of the worſt of *All Communions*, provided the *Choice* be made after much Pains, and long Conſideration. And this Doctrine *he* pretends to eſtabliſh by undeniable *Demonſtration*. *He* ſays (p. 94.) " It is a *Demonſtration in the ſtricteſt Sence of* " *the Word*. And I am very much confirmed in thinking it ſo, " becauſe this *Learned Body* have not ſo much as produced it " into Light; nor endeavoured to ſay one Word, towards " the ſhewing in what the Fallacy of it lies. It is a *Demon-* " *ſtration* of that ſort, which reduces a Matter to ſuch an Ab- " ſurdity as cannot be owned, and ſo proves the thing inten- " ded. " I thought *Demonſtrations* had not ſtood in need of the Approbation of a *Committee*, having Authority enough in themſelves.

But

But in the Name of *Euclid*, let this *Demonſtration* appear in its full Strength and Beauty, and then we ſhall hear it thus ſpeaking for it ſelf. " Whatever, ſays he, ſuppoſes a " Man condemned by God, which way ſoever he acts, can- " not be admitted. But the Notion I was there oppoſing, " implies *that* in it. And therefore, muſt be falſe. And if " it be falſe, the *Contradictory* to it muſt be true.

To this I anſwer, the firſt Propoſition is intirely falſe, for a Man may bring himſelf under thoſe unhappy Circumſtances, that *Act* which way he will (where there is only choice of Two) he muſt offend *God* in either, and conſequently ſtand in need of Pardon for his Juſtification, I will inſtance in one plain Caſe, *viz.* The preferring the choice of an *erroneous Communion*, to that of of one which is *Sound* and *Orthodox*.

If Men by *Miſtake* chooſe a *Communion* full of the groſſeſt Errors. I do ſay that their continuance in *that Communion*, even during the Time of *that Miſtake*, is ſinful, becauſe it renders every individual Member a partaker of that *Idolatry* and *Superſtition*, which is authorized, profeſs'd, and practiſed by the *whole Society*, which being Tranſgreſſions of the *Laws of God*, which *he* gave for our Direction, can't be juſtified by *Ignorance* on the Part of Man, tho' *Ignorance* may alleviate the Crime, and render the *Offender* the more *proper Object* of the *Divine Mercy*. And yet the quitting of *that Communion* may be ſinful alſo, (during the Time of the Erroneous Perſuaſion) not becauſe the *Act* is forbidden, but becauſe the *Motives* to it are Carnal and Unlawful; for a Perſon under *that Blindneſs* of Heart and Underſtanding cannot quit it upon any Religious Motive, but ſome Earthly, or Carnal Conſideration. But this is a *difficulty* which Men are not brought into by the *Providence* of *God*, but by their own *Raſhneſs* and *Folly*; and it is pious to ſay, that *God* may pardon the Man, in making due Allowances for the Infirmities of Humane Nature, who has made that *Erroneous Choice*; But it is impious to ſay, that God will juſtify *Hereſy*, *Blaſphemy*, or *Idolatry*, becauſe they are the Dictates of an *Erroneous Conſcience*. And yet the *Biſhop* ſaith (p. 95.) " An *Erroneous Conſcience*, muſt either *wholly* juſtify, or not juſtify *at all*." As if *Pardon* of *Sins* of *Ignorance*, was not ſufficient for the *Sinner*, without a Declaration from *God*, that there was nothing ſinful in them.

But here the *Biſhop* ſeems *a little* to correct *himſelf*. " I " confeſs (ſays *he*) I think it improper to ſay, that an *Erro-* " *neous Conſcience* juſtifies a Man, either in *whole*, or in " *part*, (this is very true) but very proper to ſay, that a

" Man

" Man's ſincerity, (which cannot be ſuppoſed, where a " Man does not take all proper Methods of being rightly " informed) will wholly juſtify him before God, in his making, " in the Sincerity of his Heart, the beſt Choice he can.

Here the *Biſhop* out of his extenſive Charity to *all Diſſenters* from the *eſtabliſhed Church*, has found out the great Secret of *Sincerity* which will juſtify them all, and ten thouſand more, if our Religion was capable of admitting ſo many Diviſions. I would not have the Reader think, that by *Sincerity*, the *Bangorians* underſtand that *moral Vertue*, whereby Men are directed, to preſerve an *exact Agreement* of their *Words* and *Actions*, with the *inward Sentiments* of their Mind, for that is but a *ſingle Vertue*, which is not ſufficient to ſupply that Combination of *Chriſtian Graces*, without which *no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*. Nay, ſometimes, It is a Criminal Impudence, whereby Men are prompted to boaſt of the inward Impurity of their Minds, and be openly and ſincerely wicked. For I can aſſure *his Lordſhip*, that ſome of *his Champion Friends*, can ſubſcribe to the Truth of *Articles* one Day, and write againſt *them* the next; receive *Epiſcopal Ordination*, in order to obtain a *Benefice*, and tell their *Dioceſan* to his Face ſoon after, that *his Authority* is not greater than that of an *ordinary Presbyter*; receive the *Revenues* of one *Church*, and be entirely vigorous in the *Intereſts* of another; and yet hope to go to Heaven by *Bangorian Sincerity*, equally ſufficient for the juſtification of *All Communions*. But the true Notion of *Bangorian Sincerity* is the Choice of a *Communion*, not for any Worldly Deſigns, or Intereſt, but for the Salvation of our own Souls, the great End of *all Church Communion*. No Man can deny that ſuch is a *ſincere Choice*, becauſe there is no Mixture of *Earthly* and *Heavenly Motives* together, of different and repugnant Natures, which is the true Notion of *ſincere*, as it ſignifies in Bodies, a Freedom from the Mixture of heterogenious and diſagreeing Particles,

Sincerum eſt niſi vas, quodcunq; infundis, aceſcit.

" This is *that alone* (ſaith the *Biſhop*) which juſtifies *them*, " who are in the beſt Communion, and therefore where " ever *this* is equal, it muſt have equal effect," that is, it muſt equally juſtify *them* which are in the worſt. And as " an inſincere Choice (as he ſays) of the *beſt Communion* is " of no importance in the Eyes of God," ſo a ſincere Choice of the *Worſt* (that is, the moſt erroneous) muſt juſtify the chooſer before *God*.

And

And that I do herein truly, and faithfully repreſent the *Biſhops* Senſe, is evident from the following Paragraph. " Either a Man muſt be intitled to Heaven, by the perfect " Sincerity of his Choice, or elſe none have a Title to it, " but thoſe who are in the Right," (what a ſad thing would it be, if they who are in the wrong ſhould not have as good a Title to the Kingdom of Heaven, as they who are in the Right?) " And none can be certain of it, but they who " are *Infallible*. Either (ſays *he*) a Man may be ſecure of " God's Favour, without being abſolutely certain of the " Goodneſs of his Choice, or elſe none can be ſecure of it " here upon Earth, becauſe none can be infallibly or abſo- " lutely certain, without the poſſibility of being miſtaken.

In anſwer to all which, I ſay, I wiſh the *Biſhop* had well conſidered that it is *God* who juſtifies, and that *God* may be well pleaſed with the *Sincerity* of the *choice*, (when the *Motive* to it is an Eternity of happineſs) and yet diſpleaſed with the *thing choſen*, ſo as juſtly to damn a Man to all Eternity, for chooſing a *wrong Communion*, and ſtedfaſtly adhering to it, when a *Right choice* is equally open to him. For otherwiſe we make God to be equally a Favourer of *Falſehood*; as of *Truth*, to be as well pleaſed with *Idolatry* and *Superſtition*, as with *Spiritual* and *Rational Service*, and to be as inclinable to favour *Schiſm*, *Blaſphemy*, and *Hereſy*, as the Profeſſion of that *one Faith*, which was *once delivered to the Saints*. The Prophet *Iſaiah* ſaith, (Ch. 26, 1, 2.) *We have a ſtrong City, Salvation will God appoint for Walls and Bulwarks. Open the Gates, that the righteous Nation which keepeth the Truth may enter in.* But *my Lord of* Bangor has ſet open the *Gates* of *Heaven*, as well to *thoſe* who teach the moſt *pernicious Errors*, as to *thoſe* who teach the *Truth*, provided they do it *ſincerely*, that is, heartily, totally, intirely, without the leaſt mixture of Doubt, or ſecret twinge of Conſcience. *Moſes* tells us (*Deut* 32. 4.) *God is a Rock, his work is perfect, for all his ways are Judgment, a God of Truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is he.* A *Rock* ſignifies *Stability*, and *conſiſtency* of *Parts*. But what *ſtability* or *conſiſtency* can there be in a *God*, who (according to *Biſhop Hoadly's* Doctrine) is obliged to favour, and juſtify, *all* the *repugnant* and *contradictory Tenets* of *different Communions*, which are, have been, or ſhall be from the firſt Birth of *Chriſtianity*? (I might ſay from the beginning of the World to this very day) how can *his ways* be *juſt*, who equally juſtifies the *Religious Impurities* of the antient *Gnoſticks* (for *Epiphanius* will tell you, that *they ſincerely* thought

thoſe

thoſe *Impurities* the beſt Preparatives for the *Kingdom* of *Heaven)* and the *Chaſtity*, and *Temperance* of the *pious Chriſtian*. Or, how can he deſerve the name of the *God of Truth*, who tho' *he* ſpeaks *Truth himſelf*, yet is bound to juſtify *thoſe*, who are the *Teachers* and *Supporters* of great and pernicious *Errors*? *David* had not theſe Apprehenſions of *God* when *he* penned the 50th Pſalm, *Behold* (ſaith he ver. 6) *Thou deſireſt Truth in the inward parts, and in the hidden part thou ſhalt make me to know Wiſdom*. But according to this new Scheme, *ſincere Folly* is as acceptable to God, as *Pure* and *abſtracted Wiſdom*. For all the World will grant, that a *wrong choice* is a *fooliſh choice*, and if both do juſtify us before *God*, then *God* makes no diſtinction between *Wiſdom* and *Folly*.

But if the *Biſhop* and *his Friends* deſire to be inſtructed in the difference, that *God* has put between *Wiſdom* and *Folly*, let them read at leiſure, *Solomon's Eccleſiaſtes*, *his Proverbs*, the *Wiſdom* of the *Son* of *Sirach*, and the *Encomium Moriæ* of the great *Eraſmus*.

But the *Biſhop* ſays, the *Fool* is as ſafe as the *Wiſeman*, becauſe *his fooliſh choice* is the *beſt choice* he could make.

If indeed there had been an *utter Impoſſibility* of making a *better Choice*, the *Fool* is not to be blamed, for not doing what was never in *his Power* to do. But if the *pretended Impoſſibility* of chooſing *that Communion*, which is *beſt* and *trueſt* in it ſelf, does not ariſe from the *Nature* of the thing it ſelf, but from the *Folly* or *vitioſity* of *thoſe* who make the *Choice* (the *true Church* having always been as open, and as acceſſible, as the *Conventicles* of *Schiſm* and Hereſy) *God* cannot with conſiſtency to the *Dignity* of *his Nature*, equally reward the *fooliſh choice* of the *Wrong*, with the *wiſe preference* of *Truth* to *Falſehood*, which is Eſſential to the *choice* of the *beſt Communion*.

But the *Biſhop* ſays in vindication of *his Fool*, that tho' he may be a little ſimple in the *choice* of his *Communion*, yet (p. 93.) " He is always ſuppoſed to uſe his utmoſt Endea-
" vours, and application, to chooſe the BEST, and then,
" and only then, to be juſtified by the *Sincerity* of his private
" Judgment.

But to this I anſwer, that *his Lordſhip* confounds *Diligence* with *Sincerity*, which are *two diſtinct Vertues*, and very often not to be found in the ſame Perſon. The *laborious Purſuit* of *Truth*, and the *firm aſſent* paid to *it* when overtaken, or when we think it is overtaken, are *two diſtinct operations* of the *Mind*, not capable of Conſolidation into *one clear*, and *diſtinct Idea*. A Man may entirely conſent to the *choice* of

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a *Communion*, and be a *zealous defender* of *it*, in view of being happy hereafter (which is all that can be required towards the *ſincerity* of *his Choice)* who yet, to ſpeak in the *Biſhop's* words, never uſed *his utmoſt Endeavours, and Application*, (p. 93.) nor *has taken all proper methods of being informed*, which is the Right (p. 95.) For Men do not meet together upon a great Plain, to *chooſe their Communions*, (as once they are thought to have *choſen Kings)* but for the moſt part reſolve to continue in *that*, in which they were firſt inſtructed, or which they have *choſen* for very ſlight Reaſons, but reſolve to defend with the utmoſt of their Strength and Vigour. But if none are *Sincere*, but thoſe who have *taken all proper methods for their Information*, or *uſed their utmoſt Endeavours and Application*, I fear the number of *ſincere Diſſenters* would be ſo very ſmall, that it would be no great *ſervice* to the *Government*, to bring *them* into *Poſts* of *Honour* and *Profit*.

But the *Biſhop* further tells us, that " either a Man muſt " be intitled to Heaven, by the perfect ſincerity of his " Choice, or elſe none have a Title to it; but thoſe who are " in the Right. *(ib.)*

I anſwer, that thoſe who are in the *Wrong*, can't have a right to the Reward of thoſe who are in the *Right*, according the ſtricteſt Rules of *Juſtice*, tho' *God* in *his infinite mercy*, may pardon the Sins of an *erroneous Choice*, in conſideration of the *Prejudices* of *Education*, the Force of *external Temptation*, and the *Weakneſſes* and *Infirmities* of *Humane Nature*, in reſpect of which, the beſt and wiſeſt of us ought to ſay, *Enter not into judgment with thy Servant, O Lord, for in thy ſight ſhall no Man living be juſtified.* But it is one thing to ſay, that *God* out of his large Magazine of *uncovenanted Mercies*, may pardon the Offences of an *erroneous Conſcience*, and another to ſay, that the *ſincerity* of a Man's Erroneous Conſcience, muſt, or will juſtify him before *God* not in *Part*, but in the *Whole*, or, to uſe the *Biſhop's* Words, it muſt *either wholly juſtify, or not at all.* Of the firſt, our Saviour gives an inſtance, when the Jews out of a *ſincere Love* to the *Law* of *Moſes*) were about to nail him to the Croſs, in praying for them in theſe Words, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.* For the ſecond, we can't quote the Authority of *one Text* of *Scripture*, nor alledge *one Reaſon* which will not overthrow all the *Eſſential Attributes* of the *Divine Nature*, and leaves us *God* equally kind to *Truth* and *Falſehood*, to *Vice* and *Vertue*.

If it be true what the *Biſhop* ſays, that becauſe *Sincerity alone juſtifies us in the beſt Choice*, it muſt juſtify us equally in

the *Worſt* (that is, the moſt erroneous) and that *where ever this is equal it muſt have an equal Effect*. I anſwer the *Sincerity* of a *Right*, and a *wrong Choice* can never be *equal*, in themſelves, becauſe the *one* proceeds from a Mind enlightned with the ſaving Knowledge of the Truth, the *other* from a Mind darkned with pernicious Errors. No Man would continue in an *Idolatrous*, *Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical Communion*, much leſs prefer the *Choice* thereof to the *True*, if he was not byaſſed in *his Choice*, by a Love to *Idolatrous*, *Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical Worſhip*, the vitioſity of which Affection, being the immediate Cauſe of the *Choice* or the continuance in *it*, can no more juſtify us in the Eyes of *God*, than other vitious Affections can do by the *Choice* of any other ſinful Action. For to ſay, as the *Biſhop* does, that the *Error is unavoidable* (and therefore I preſume he means *not criminal*) is to make *God* the Author of the Error, for nothing is *unavoidable*, or *impoſſible* to Man, but what is made ſo by *God*, who is the ſole Giver, and Determiner of Humane Powers. The *Biſhop* then muſt ſay that *God* has made the *Choice* of a *Right Communion impoſſible* to ſome Men, or elſe their *Choice* of a *wrong Communion*, could not be *unavoidable*; or he muſt grant that the *Choice* is made *unavoidable*, by the perſonal Fault, or Defect of the *Chooſer*, and then it will follow that a Man may be juſtified by his very Faults, or Sins, which is a little more than *Antinomian* Doctrine.

As for his Argument, that, " either a Man may be ſecure " of God's Favour, without being abſolutely certain of the " Goodneſs of his Choice, or elſe none can be ſecure of it " here upon Earth; becauſe none can be infallibly or abſo- " lutely certain, without the poſſibility of being miſtaken;" It concludes not ſo ſtrongly againſt the *Certainty* a Man may have of the Goodneſs of *his own Choice*, as againſt the *Certainty* he can have of *his own Sincerity*. For if the *Biſhop*'s Reaſon is good, *viz.* That a Man can't be *abſolutely certain* of the *goodneſs of his Choice*, becauſe he is *fallible*, then neither can he be *certain* of *his own Sincerity*, for a *fallible Man*, according to *him*, can be *infallibly* ſure of nothing. And if *Sincerity* implies (as the *Biſhop* ſays) a *diligent uſe* of *all means proper* for Information, to the *utmoſt of his Powers*, beſides a *Purity of Intention*, I will defy the *greateſt Saint* that ever yet lived, to be *infallibly certain* (for nothing leſs than *Infallibility* will ſatisfy the *Biſhop's* Curioſity,) that through the whole courſe of his Life, he has us'd *All proper means*, to the *utmoſt of his Power*, to be informed of all the Excellen-

cies of *one Communion* above *Another*, or, that *no Conſideration* of the *Advantages* of this preſent World, did in the *leaſt Degree* mingle themſelves with the *Thoughts* of *Eternity*, or *at all influence*, either *his Choice of*, or *continuance in* the *Communion* of *any one Sect* of Chriſtians amongſt us. But if a *Fallible* Man can be *certain* of *any Thing* in *Religion*, he may be as *certain* as he need to be of *any Thing* on this ſide Heaven, that where the *Word of God* is *truly preach'd*, the *Sacraments duly adminiſtered* according to Chriſt's Inſtitution, a *Regular Succeſſion* of the *Miniſtry maintained*, a *wholſome Diſcipline* for the Correction of notorious Offenders *exerciſed*, a *pure Form of divine Worſhip ſetled*, a *Faith agreeable to the Holy Scriptures profeſſed*, and a *decency in the Circumſtantials of Religion nicely obſerved*, *there* is a *Rightful* and *Lawful Communion* to be found, by vertue of thoſe bright Criterions, not to be found in any other.

But (p. 96.) The *Biſhop* complains of the *Committee*, for ſaying, that if an *erroneous Choice* made in *Sincerity*, does wholly juſtify the *erring Perſon*, This throws off *all* the Authority of lawful Governors, he ſays, " By this it ſeems, as if Men " were to be determined, in their Choice of a *Church Com-* " *munion*, by *Authority*, and by the *Authority of lawful Gover-* " *nors.*" And then he ſays, " there is no need of *Thought*, " or *Choice*, or *Sincerity*, or any thing like it."

But herein, I am afraid, the *Biſhop* is more miſtaken in the *true Meanning* of the *Committee*, than the *Committee* were miſtaken in the *Senſe of his Sermon*. For the *Determination of Choice* is an *inward Operation* of the *Mind*, but *all Authority* is no more, in *Matters of Faith*, than an *external Motive* to *Aſſent*; and therefore to ſpeak *properly* (and by *impropriety* of Speech no Controverſy will ever be determined) no *Authority* (Humane or Divine) can *determine* the *Choice of the Mind*, but only gives *motives* of *aſſent*, by which the Man muſt *determine* himſelf in *that Choice*, and conſequently is as reſponſible to *God* for *That*, as for *any other* MORAL ACTION in his Power. And the Senſe of the *Committee* undoubtedly was this, *viz.* That the *Biſhop* by teaching that an *erroneous Conſcience* does juſtify us before God, does thereby diſſolve *all Authority*, *properly* called, both in *God* and *Man*. For if a Man determines *his Choice*, by the *real Sentiments* of his Mind, tho' *thoſe Sentiments* are contrary to *Truths* taught by *Chriſt* and *his Miniſters*, he is juſtified by his *Sincerity*, according to the *Biſhop*, notwithſtanding his Oppoſition to *all Authority* both Humane and Divine: So every Man's *private*

Judgment,

Judgment, ſets *him* above *all Authority* whatſoever, which *he* can't obey without Sin, if it hapens to be oppoſed by it. It is true, there is a Phyſical neceſſity, that every Man ſhould be determined by his *private Judgment*, for no Man can any more determine for another, than he can eat, drink, or ſleep for him. Nay I will gratify the *Biſhop* ſo far as to aver, that there never was, is, or ever can be, ſuch a Thing as a *publick Determination* of any one Article whatſoever, but that what we call *publick Determination* is only a *Collection of private Judgments met in one Place, for one Deſign*, and *by vertue of one common Authority together*, where the *Majority* of *private Judgments* overcomes the *Minority* of the ſame Species with themſelves, and is called the *Sentence*, or *Determination* of the whole. As the *Apoſtles* ſpeak *Acts*, 15. 28. Ἔδοξε τῷ ἁγίῳ πνεύματι & ἡμῶν, *It ſeemed good to the Holy Ghoſt, and to us*; tho' ſome Zealots were there, who contended earneſtly for the Rites of *Circumciſion*, and the neceſſary Obſervation of the *ceremonial Law*. But the *private Judgment* of *thoſe few*, did not excuſe, or juſtify their diſſent from that *Truth* publiſhed by the *Majority*; there being an *eternal Obligation* in *Truth*, which never can be altered either by the *publick* or *private Judgment*, of Men. Every Man muſt *eat* and *drink* for himſelf, and is the moſt *proper Judge*, of the *Quantity* and *Quality* of his *Food*, or *Liquor*, but if he *miſtakes* in either, (as too many frequently do) his *miſtake* will not prevent the *Danger* that will ariſe from a *glaſs* of *Poyſon*, tho' *ſincerely* ſwallowed for his good; nor the *guilt* of *Gluttony*, or *Drunkenneſs*, if he be miſtaken in *his Meaſures*. *Authority* in *matters of Practice* is a *Power* to oblige the *Conſciences* of Men to do ſomething which is not forbidden by a *ſuperior Authority*. Now, if *Chriſt* hath left any ſuch *Power* in *his Church*, then they who teach, that a Man is *juſtified* by his *private Judgment*, for Diſobedience to *that Authority*, which *Chriſt* has given to *his Miniſters*, (either acting *ſingly*, or in *Synod*) whenever his *Conſcience* tells him it is *unlawful*, or *uſurp'd*, do throw off *all Authority* of *lawful Governors*, becauſe they make the neceſſity of *Obedience* to depend upon the *different Opinions* of Men, whereas it depends upon that *Truth* in Things, which is not to be changed by our *various*, and *diſſonant Apprehenſions* of them.

To ſay as the *Biſhop* does (p. 96.) that, " If Men were to " be determined in the Choice of a *Church Communion*, by " the *Authority* of *lawful Governors*, there would be no need " of *Thought* or *Choice*, or *Sincerity*, or any thing like it; "

would be partly true, if the only *external Motive* to our *Choice* was the *Authority* of the *Church*; But if our *Motive* is *that Truth* which we are ſatisfied is in the *Word* of *God*, then there is room enough for *Thought* to conſider, whether the *Determinations* of *thoſe* calling themſelves the *Church of God*, are agreeable to the *Doctrine* of the *Scripture* or no, for if they are, they are to be believed, tho' the reſult of our Conſideration ſhould terminate in the denial of them. For to juſtify *Unbelief* by *Error*, is to juſtify one Imperfection by another. And if they are not agreeable to *Reaſon* and *Scripture*, our *Belief* would be Criminal, tho' the *motive* to it was the *Authority* even of the *univerſal Church*. And there would be room enough for *Choice* of our *Obedience* to ſuch *Commands* of *authorized Men* as are contradictory to no *Command* of *God*, without paying a *blind Obedience* to thoſe which are really oppoſite to them. For to refuſe *Obedience* to *lawful Commands* of *Superiors*, is as criminal as to obey *thoſe* which are not ſo, but our *apprehenſion* of either, does not alter the Nature of Things. As therefore there is no *Humane Authority* in the *Church* to juſtify our *Choice* of an *erroneus Communion*, ſo neither is there *any Authority* in the *Conſcience* of a *private Man*, to juſtify him in the *Choice* of a *ſinful Communion*, nor indeed of any one ſinful Action whatever. For *David* prayed to God to *cleanſe him from ſecret Sins*, that is, from thoſe Tranſgreſſions, for which his *Conſcience* (being darkned with a falſe Appearance of Truth) did never check him, for thoſe which he committed againſt the *known Dictates* of it. And therefore tho' I grant that, "it is the *Duty* of a *Chriſtian* (as "the *Biſhop* ſays) either in a *Popiſh* or *Proteſtant Country* to "ſearch the *New Teſtament* and make the *beſt Choice* he can" yet if ſuch a *Search* happen to end in what the *Biſhop* calls an *involuntary Error*, I dare not ſay *that Error* will juſtify his *Diſobedience*, to the *lawful Commands*, or *true Deciſions* of his *Superiors* in *Church*, or *State*. For this ſhuts up the Children of Light, and the Children of Darkneſs in the ſame Apartment; for if an *erroneous Conſcience* can juſtify us before *God*, an *enlightned Conſcience* can do no more; and if there be as true *Sincerity* in *Error*, as in *Knowledge*, and *Sincerity alone* juſtifies our *Choice*, there is no need of liſtning to the Advice of *Solomon*, *buy the Truth, and ſell it not*, ſince Falſehood would ſerve our turn as well. But let the *Biſhop* write what *he* pleaſes in defence of *Ignorance* and *Error*, I ſhall pray to *God* to give me the ſame Grace *he* gave to St. *Paul to do all things for the Truth*, but nothing at all againſt *It*. For tho' the *ſearching* of the *Scripture*, with a deſire of finding out the

Truth

Truth, may be eſteemed by *God* a *Conduct* worthy of a *Chriſtian*, yet if *that ſearch* ends in *any Error* obſtructive to *that Holineſs without which no Man ſhall ſee the Lord*, (as moſt Errors in Religion do) the *Sincerity* may be juſtified as a *Chriſtian Vertue*, and yet the *concomitant Error* be hateful to *that God of Truth* who ſent his Son to be the *Light of the World*, and to prevent Mens *walking* in *Darkneſs* (*he that followeth me* (ſaith Chriſt) *ſhall not walk in Darkneſs*. Joh. 8. 12.) in vain are *Chriſtians* called the *Children of Light*, if they walk as ſecurely in the *Dark*, as in the *marvellous Light* of *Chriſt*'s moſt *glorious Goſpel*. *If we ſay we have fellowſhip with him*, ſaith St. *John*, (1 Epiſt. 1. 6.) *and walk in Darkneſs, we lie, and do not the Truth*. And as for what the *Biſhop* ſays of a *ſincere Chriſtian*'s falling without Danger into *involuntary Errors*, *he* might, with as much Senſe, ſay that he might fall into *involuntary Sins*; for *God* has given that *Faculty* of Reaſon, and that *Aſſiſtance* of *divine Revelation* to his Creature *Man*, that no *ſincere Search* can terminate in *any dangerous Error*, without ſome vitioſity of the *Will* or *Affections*, which is far from that *Purity* by which Men are prepared to *ſee God* as he is.

I wonder therefore the *Biſhop* ſhould complain of the *Committee* for charging him " with putting *all Communions* on an equal Foot, " (*p.* 97.) For if *all Communions* do *equally juſtify*, and *Juſtification* is the end of *all Communions*, I can't ſee wherein they charge *him* with a Doctrine in *his Sermon*, which he does not juſtify in *his Anſwer*. Much leſs Reaſon has *he* to complain of *Miſrepreſentation*, when they charge *him* with " making every Man, how Illiterate and Ignorant " ſoever, his own ſole Judge and Director on Earth, in " the Affair of Religion, " when *he* takes upon *him* the Defence of *all Ignoramus's* in Religion, and *all the Illiterates* of the Kingdom, in plainer Terms than the *Committee* could have expected it from *him*.

He ſays firſt, " That the *Illiterate* and *Ignorant*, as they are " called, have as much Right, and are as much obliged to " judge for themſelves in the matter of Religion, as the " *greateſt Scholars*, and the moſt knowing in what the World " calls *Learning*.

I anſwer, this is partly True, becauſe *neither* can have a *Right* to judge for *themſelves*, or *others*, againſt the *Truth*, and *all* have a *Right* to judge *according to Truth*, for *that* is a *righteous Judgment*. I obſerve farther, that *Literate* and *Ignorant* are not *oppoſites* to each other; for all Men who are *Illiterate* muſt not preſently be ſtiled *Ignorant*, many having, without the help of *Letters*, made a better uſe of their Reaſon, both

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in matters of Religion, and in the Affairs of this World, than ſome who have ſpent all their Life time in turning over *Fathers* and *Councils*. I confeſs alſo, that what the World calls *Learning*, is not always a *neceſſary Qualification* for the *Kingdom of Heaven*; the World having been often obliged to change its Opinion of *Learning*, and what was called *Learning* in one Age, hath not been eſteemed worthy of that appellation in another. *Learning* in the Times of *Homer* and *Heſiod*, was *Pleaſantry of Fiction*; afterwards it was the *Knowledge of Languages*, eſpecially of *thoſe* in which the beſt Books were written, after that it was reſolved into *hard Words*, and *occult Qualities*; ſometimes it was thought to be the *Knowledge* of the *Mechanick Powers* of *Matter* and *Motion*; at other Times it was eſteemed to be a *right Calculation* of *Number* and *Meaſures*; the *Materia ſubtilis* of *Des Cartes*, bore once a great ſway in the *Schools*, 'till it was dethroned by Sir *Iſrac Newton*'s, *Powers* of *Attraction*. In *Theology* it was in *ſome Ages*, the *Authority* of *Popes*, *Fathers*, and *Councils*, and in *our own*, if ſome do not ſtand up vigorouſly in Defenſe of *Truth*, it is likely to become for the Future, nothing elſe but *Ingenious Prevarication*. But in propriety of Speech, *Learning* is the *Knowledge of Letters*, and the *Lettered* and *Uunlettered* Man are *oppoſites* to one another. But to ſay of *either* of *theſe*, that they have a *Right to judge for themſelves*, is to ſay, that whether they judge according to *Truth* or no, they are in no *Danger* of the *Divine Diſpleaſure*, for *God* can't be angry for Men's making uſe of *that Right* which *himſelf* has beſtowed upon them. But the Truth is, *God* never gave to the *Lettered*, or *Unlettered Perſon*, a *Right* to paſs a *falſe Judgment* upon the *Affairs of Conſcience*, or *Matters of mere Religion*, but gave to *both* the uſe of *Reaſon* and *Divine Revelation* by Conformity to which, the *Reſults* of their *Private Judgments* are to be determined, whether they are good, or whether they are evil.

Chriſtians, in reſpect to *Knowledge*, may be divided into three diſtinct Claſſes. Firſt, the *Heretical* and *Schiſmatical*. Secondly, the *Lettered* and *Unlettered*. Thirdly the *Taught*, or *Untaught Chriſtian*, called by the Biſhop the *Ignorant*, The *Heretical* and *Schiſmatical Chriſtian*, is *he*, who believes, or teaches, *that* which is not True, and for *that* Reaſon ſeperates himſelf from the Body of the Faithful. Theſe are the Perſons whom the Biſhop juſtifies (*p.* 97.) by the *Right* they have to *judge for themſelves*. (which *Right* after all, will be found to be a mere natural neceſſity) " Whatever Capacity " (ſays he) they have, it is *their own*, and given them by *God*

" to

" to guide *them.* " But it was not given them to guide them into *Error*, but the *ſaving Knowledge* of the *Truth.* 'Tis true, *God* expects nothing from them, but what is proportionable to their Faculties. But certainly *Truth* is more proportionable to the Faculties, and Capacities of Men, than *Falſhood* and *Error.* He ſays, " a good uſe of their Faculties is what " God requires of them. " But I hope his *Lordſhip* will not call the Profeſſion of *Hereſy*, a *good uſe of their Faculties*, for Faculties were not given us to lead us into fundamental Errors, which Hereſy always ſuppoſes. I will grant the Biſhop, that " another Man's Choice or Judgment in *their* " Name, will not juſtify *them* before God. " But I will ſay, ſo neither can the Judgment *they* paſs for *themſelves*, if it is egregiouſly Erroneous. For God is the Father of Light, but not of Darkneſs. Nor can I ſee any Neceſſity, why " a " Judge ſhould be fixed to determine for all Men, (as the " the Biſhop ſays) whether their own Capacities are good " enough to enable them to determine for themſelves; or " whether they are of that low ſort, as that they muſt be " determined by others. " For both high, and low ſort, are bound, by an abſolute neceſſity of their Natures, to determine for themſelves, but neither ſort have a *Right* to determine againſt *Truth*; for tho' they may be pardoned, yet, ſince ſufficient Light is come into the World, they can't be juſtified, by ſhutting their Eyes againſt it. And this does not go (as the Biſhop ſurmizes) upon a ſuppoſition, " that " God has made *many* with ſuch Faculties, as give them a " Right to judge for themſelves; and many others with " ſuch as give them no ſuch Right. " But it ſuppoſes that God has given to *all Men* ſuch equal Rights and Faculties, and ſo bright a Revelation of the Truth, that whoever falls into any notorious Errors, muſt fall into them by his own Neglect, or by vitious Inclinations in his own Mind; as Chriſt ſays, *Light is come into the World, and Men love Darkneſs rather than Light, becauſe their Deeds are Evil.* Whence it is plain there's no need of regarding his Lordſhip's Sarcaſm (*p.* 98.) *viz.* " *They* are fit to judge for themſelves, who judge " as their Superiors do, and *they* are not fit—— who judge " contrary to them. " For neither are fit to judge for themſelves, if they are not qualified to diſcern Truth from Falſhod, and if they are, they are ſufficiently qualified to judge (as far as is poſſible) for themſelves, and to give directions to others, when they are called to bear Office in the Church.

There

There was no need of the Biſhop's calling in the unlearned World to his Aſſiſtance, by telling us (p. 97.) "that the "*Illiterate* and *Ignorant* have as much Right to judge for "themſelves——as the *greateſt Scholars*; and (p. 98) that "what is called *Learning*, is ſo far from being the moſt neceſſary, or the moſt uſeful Qualification—— that none, in "experience, are ſeen to be leſs ſecure from Error, than "*Learned* Men." For we dare not call every *Unlettered* Chriſtian by the Name of an *Ignorant*, but of an *Unlettered Man*, for he may be Maſter of a very ſound Belief, and yet live without the Knowledge of the very uſe of *Letters*. For tho' Men are enabled thereby to preſerve the beſt of their Ideas from Oblivion, and to deliver them to the preſent and future Ages, in ſuch laſting Characters, as are never likely to be forgotten; yet an honeſt Chriſtian may learn enough from hearing the Scripture read, and the oral Inſtructions of the Miniſters of God, to make himſelf wiſe to Salvation, and to avoid many of *thoſe* dangerous Errors, which are taught by *thoſe* whom we call *Learned* Men. Nay I will add, it is poſſible for a Man to have a good *Syſtem* of Mathematical Sciences in his Head, a *Right Notion* of the whole Law of Nature, and a better *Body* of Metaphyſicks than ever yet was publiſhed, without the leaſt aſſiſtance from *Letters*. The excellent blind Profeſſor of Mathematicks at *Cambridge*, is an inſtance of the firſt. The ſecond and third Obſervations may be proved by Inſtances innumerable. But ſtill I would not be ſo injurious to the *Lettered*, or profuſe of Favour to the *Unlettered Chriſtian*, as to ſay with the Biſhop, that "one *Illiterate honeſt Man*, may be as capable of judging for "himſelf in *Religion* (in Popiſh Countries) as all their "*Learned Men* united; even ſuppoſing them met together "in a *General Council*." For even *Popiſh Biſhops* met in *Council*, may be more capable of diſcerning between *Truth* and *Falſhood*, than the *Illiterate honeſt Man*, and yet though Superiors in *Knowledge*, Inferior in that *Grace*, and *Honeſty*, which are the *choiceſt Gifts* of the *Divine Spirit*, and coming fettered with the *Papal Supremacy* (founded upon a notion of the Church's being the *Kingdom* or *Monarchy* of *Chriſt*, and the *Popes* his *legitimate Succeſſors* in *that Monarchy*) they may eſtabliſh ſuch Doctrines, as are moſt advantageous to the *Papal* temporal Intereſt, and *their own*, without regard to *Truth*, or *Juſtice*, both which by the Grace of God may be duly reſpected, by the *pious illiterate Chriſtian*. And as there can be no *Councils Free*, or *General*, in *Popiſh Countries* ſubject to the *Monarchical Powers* of the *Roman Biſhop*; and

where all Acts are uſed to breed up Men in a blind Obedience to all the authoritative Deciſions of *Popes* and *Councils*, many *Papiſts* may as *ſincerely* believe *Tranſubſtantiation*, &c. as the Biſhop's *honeſt illiterate Chriſtian*, does deteſt and abhor it. How then is the Judgment of the *illiterate Proteſtant*, ſuperior to the Judgment of the *Learned*, or *Lettered Papiſt*, but becauſe (the *Sincerity* ſuppoſed to be equal) the *one* is more agreeable to *Truth* than the other. There is therefore in *Truth* a Superiority over the *Sincerity* of the Choice, either in *Proteſtant*, or *Papiſt*, which can never be deſtroyed either by *private*, or *publick Deciſions*, and which denominates *that Choice* to be the beſt, which is moſt agreeable to *that* eternal Truth *God* has placed in the nature of things, not to to be altered by the *Sincerity* and *Inſincerity* of humane Opinions.

Tho' therefore I grant that the *unlettered Chriſtian* may be in a ſafer way to Salvation by the profeſſion of the *Truth* than the *Lettered Chriſtian*, who for filthy Lucre perſiſts in erroneous Doctrines, yet I would not have any ſo far to miſtake the *Truth*, as to think that there is the ſame Capacity of *judging* (as *judging* is purely an Act of the Underſtanding) in *thoſe* who muſt depend upon ſometimes *faulty Tranſlations*, and *thoſe* who underſtand the *Original Languages*, *thoſe* who know the State of the Church in all Ages, and all the Points ever controverted in it, and *thoſe* who at beſt can know no more than its preſent State and Condition; *thoſe* who have the Additional helps of Artificial Reaſoning, and *thoſe* who truſt to pure and unaſſiſted Nature. For tho' the degrees of *Sincerity* may be *equal*, the ſuperior Capacity of *judging* will be always in the *Lettered Chriſtian*, even when *Truth* it ſelf is on the other ſide.

The *Biſhop* indeed ſays (p. 98, 99.) " It would be a deplo-
" rable Condition indeed, if the Great and Important Points
" of Chriſtianity, thoſe upon which *Eternal Salvation* depends,
" could not be judged of without Learning. " And yet as deplorable as it is, it is the very State of the *Goſpel* of *Chriſt*. For ſince the main Points of Chriſtianity are recorded in *Letters*, They muſt be conveyed to us, by *thoſe* who underſtand *Letters*, or elſe be buried in Eternal Oblivion. And the better we underſtand *thoſe Letters*, the better *Judges* we are of thoſe *Great and Important Points* which concern *Everlaſting Salvation*, by *Letters* conveyed to us. But it would be a deplorable Condition indeed, if men of *no Letters* were allowed to be more competent *Judges* of *Truth* and *Falſhood*, than the

Learned, or *Literate Chriſtian*. And it is an Affront to common ſenſe to ſay, that ſuppoſing the natural Faculties equal in Both, the Additional external Helps which are to be found in Books, do not give Advantage to the *Literate* above the *Illiterate* Perſon. And it would be ſtill a more deplorable Condition, if the *Unlearned* ſhould, from the *Biſhop's* encouragement, preſume, (as in all probability they would) that as they were as able to *judge* for Themſelves, as a *General Council*, ſo They were as capable of *judging* for Others; and ſetting aſide all Regard to *Original Scripture*, *Antient Fathers*, *Decrees of Councils*, *Artificial Improvements of Reaſon*, &c. ſhould begin a Reformation of Religion, with Staves and Clubs, and Swords, and Piſtols, the uſual and ſtrongeſt Arguments of all Popular Reformations.

But I will not here ſuppoſe that by *Learning*, the *Biſhop* only means the *Knowledge of Letters*, but of whatſoever is moſt uſually comprehended under that venerable Appellation, or moſt properly underſtood by it. In ſtrict propriety of Speech I know but of two things that deſerve *that* Name, and that is the *Knowledge of Hiſtory*, and the *Artificial Improvements of natural Reaſon*. As for the *Knowledge* of *Grammar*, it is but an Introduction to *true Learning*, and may be called *Learning*, by the ſame Figure of Speech, as the *viſible Church* of *Chriſt* upon Earth, may be called the *Kingdom of God*, the *Kingdom of Chriſt*, or the *Kingdom of Heaven*. It is an Entrance thro' which the greateſt part of Mankind muſt paſs, who deſire to enter in that ſtately Palace, but it is not the Palace it ſelf; for *he* who goes no farther than the *Knowledge* of *Words*, without the *Knowledge of Things*, can, at beſt, be but reckoned amongſt the Candidates of ſound and uſeful Learning. But I hope all Men of Senſe will grant, that the *Knowledge* of *Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory* is neceſſary for the *Rulers* of *thoſe Churches*, who think that *Chriſt* and *his Apoſtles* beſt knew, what Form of Government and Diſcipline was proper for a *Church*, which was to laſt to the end of the World, tho' it is not ſo to *thoſe private Chriſtians*, who think themſelves as capable of *Judging* as a *General Council*, and able, without the view of any Pattern, to build up Churches of a new Model, to entertain Believers of all Perſuaſions; whereas it is eaſily to be learned from all Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtorians, that the *Church of Chriſt* as it came freſh out of the hands of *Chriſt* and *his Apoſtles*, did cenſure *Heretical*, and *Schiſmatical* Teachers, and thoſe ſeduced by *Them*, without enquiry into the *Sincerity* of their *Conſciences*, but the *Truth* of

of their *Doctrines*; for it was not their Buſineſs to judge of the *Heart*, which to Man is unſearcheable, but of the *Truth* of reſpective Tenents, of which They were to judge by the *Rule* of *Scripture*, which muſt be ſufficient to make a plain diſtinction between *Truth* and *Falſhood*, or elſe it is an imperfect and needleſs *Rule*, ſince *Conſcience* might be as *ſincere* without it, as with it. St. *Pauls* Directions to the *Romans* (16. 17.) to *mark thoſe who cauſed Diviſions, and Offences, contrary to the Doctrine which they had learned* from the *Apoſtles*; for tho' thoſe Men by *good words* (ver 18) *and fair Speeches deceived the hearts of the Simple*, telling them, perhaps, that they were *ſincerely* perſuaded of the *Truth* of their dividing Doctrines, yet St. *Paul* who had the *gift of diſcerning Spirits*, knew very well, that under a pretence of *Conſcience*, they were *ſerving their own Bellies*; and whether they meant *ſincerely* the good of their Hearers, or no, they did a real Damage to *honeſt* and *ſimple* Men, by turning them away from *that Truth* which was delivered to them by the *Apoſtles*, and therefore were to be *avoided*, that is, excommunicated, in the *Biſhop's* Language. The *Council* of *Nice* condemned *Arius*, for teaching a Doctrine which *They* eſteemed falſe, not becauſe it was contrary to *his Conſcience*, but contrary to the *Teſtimony* of the Holy Scriptures; but *They*, and the *Antient Biſhops*, medled not with his Recantation, for if the Matter of it was true, it might do ſome good in the Publication, but if it was feigned, the damage would be only to himſelf, and known only to *God*, who *ſearcheth the hearts and reins*; for the Judgment of the Heart is ſo peculiar to God, that it is as high a Preſumption, to ſay *all Diſſenters*, (*Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical*) are *Sincere* in the Choice of their Seperate Communions, as it is to think, or ſay, that they are altogether *Hypocritical*. The firſt tends to the giving Licenſe to *Wolves*, in *Sheeps cloathing*, to deſtroy the Flock of *Chriſt* by poiſonous Doctrines; the Second may end in the *Puniſhment* of ſome *Erroneous Chriſtians* in this World, whom *God* of his Infinite Mercy may think worthy of *Pardon* in another. But as both theſe are Invaſions of *God's* Prerogative, the *Apoſtles*, and their moſt immediate *Succeſſors*, (as is plain from Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory) made Enquiry into the *Truth*, or *Falſhood* of Doctrine, in order to preſerve the *Depoſitum* of *Truth* committed to their Charge, without invading the Prerogative of *God*, in judging the *Sincerity* of Men's Conſciences, for which nevertheleſs the *Apoſtles* were better qualified, than it was poſſible for any of their *Succeſſors* to be.

Tho'

Tho' therefore I am not ſo partial to what we call *Learning*, as to ſay with an antient *Philoſopher*, that a *Learned* Man differs as much from *One* who is *Unlearned*, as a *Living Man* differs from *One* who is *Dead*; yet I will ſay, that a *Learned Man* excels as much the *Unlearned*, in a Capacity of *Judgment*, as one who has the Opportunity of knowing the *Grand Affairs* of the *Univerſal Church* in all Ages, may be ſuppoſed to excel *Thoſe*, who can know little more than the *Eccleſiaſtical Affairs* of their own Time. But it does not thence follow, that " then the moſt *Learned Man* has certainly a Title to be the *Univerſal Judge*." (p. 99.) For ſomething more than a *Natural* or *improved Capacity*, is required to conſtitute an *Univerſal Judge:* Firſt, there muſt be a *Commiſſion*, otherwiſe the moſt *Learned Man*, ought not to make *Himſelf* ſo much as a *Speaker* in the *Church of God*. Secondly, there muſt be as much Aſſurance given of his *Integrity*, as of his *Ability*; otherwiſe, we may give up our underſtandings as well to a *Miniſter* of *Satan*, as to a *Miniſter* of *God*. Thirdly, there muſt be a ſupernatural Aſſiſtance of the *Divine Spirit*, for *every good and perfect gift cometh from God, who is the Father of Lights*, as the Devil is the Author of all Sin and Darkneſs. When ſuch a *Learned Man* as this appears in the World, we will acknowledge it our Duty, to ſubmit *our* Underſtandings to *His*, as far as it is poſſible for us to do, (*ad impoſſibile nemo tenetur*) but it is impoſſible for us to ſubmit *our* Underſtandings, without firſt Judging for our ſelves, whether we have juſt Reaſon to ſubmit our ſelves to *his* Underſtanding, or no. And this great *Learned Man* muſt judge for *Himſelf*, whether he has any ſuch Powers, or no, before he can preſume to preſcribe to Others; and when he has dictated all he can to *Others*, he can no more judge for *Others*, than he can eat, drink, or take Phyſick for *Others*. And when *thoſe Others* have judged for *themſelves*, they muſt leave it to *God*, the ſupreme Judge of all Things, to determine whether *their* Determinations are *true*, or *falſe*. If they are *true*, they muſt be pleaſing to *God*; but if they are *erroneous*, they muſt be diſpleaſing to *Him*, according to two of thoſe *fundamental Rules* which the *Biſhop* lays down in pag. 3d. of his Book. *viz.*

" Firſt, whatſoever is contrary to the firſt *Notions* of a " *God*, eſtabliſhed upon the Evidences of *Reaſon*, cannot be " admitted by any one, who believes a *God* upon thoſe " *Evidences*."

" Secondly,

" Secondly, whatſoever is contrary to the plain *Deſign*, " or *Declarations* of the *Goſpel*, can't be received by any " one who believes the *Goſpel*, becauſe it deſtroys the very *Goſpel* which *he* believes. "

Now, if it is contrary to the very firſt *Notions* of a *God*, to be an Enemy to *Truth*, or a Friend to *Error*, then the whole Doctrine of *Juſtification* by *Sincerity*, falls down before the face of *Truth*, as the Idol *Dagon* fell down before the *Ark* of the *true* and *living God*.

And this will appear from the beſt Definitions we can give of *Juſtification*, of *Sin*, and of *God Himſelf*. To *juſtify Perſons*, in the *Scripture* Dialect, is to *pardon their Sins*, and to treat them as if (tho' great Sinners) they had always been *juſt* and *righteous* Perſons. In this Senſe it is uſed by St. *Peter*, Acts 13. 38, 39. *Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that thro' this man is preached unto you the forgiveneſs of Sins: And by him all that believe are juſtified from all things, from which ye could not be juſtified by the Law of Moſes*, that is, *thoſe Sins* which could not be *pardoned* by the *blood* of *Bulls*, and *Goats*, will be *pardoned* by the *Blood* of the *Bleſſed Jeſus*. And that this *Forgiveneſs* is not an Act of ſtrict *Juſtice*, but of Infinite *Mercy*, is plain from the words of St. *Paul*, Rom. 3. 24. *Being juſtified freely by his Grace, thro' the Redemption that is in Jeſus Chriſt*. And that our being treated as *Juſt Perſons* is precedaneous to Glorification, is likewiſe evident from Rom. 8. 30. *Whom he juſtified, them he alſo glorified*. See it uſed in the ſame, or like ſignification Tit. 3. 7. and other places.

But to *juſtify Things*, or *Actions*, is to declare that they are *Juſt*, *True*, and *Honeſt*, *God* ſays, Exod. 23. 7. that He *will not juſtify the wicked*; that is, tho' He may *pardon* him upon Repentance, yet He will never declare his *Approbation* of his ſhedding innocent Blood, or any other Wickedneſs whatſoever: Deut. 25. 1. *God* ſays, *If there be a controverſie between Men, and they come unto judgment, that* the Judges *may judge them, then they ſhall juſtify the righteous, and condemn the wicked*, that is, they ſhall pronounce that *Cauſe* to be juſt, which they find to be ſo after a ſtrict and impartial Enquiry, without reſpect to the moral Qualifications of *Plaintiff* or *Defendant*, ſince a good Man, by miſtake, may have a bad Cauſe, and an unjuſt Man bring a righteous Cauſe before the Judges. For tho' it was not the *Cauſe*, but the *Man*, which was to *lie down, and be beaten* with many Stripes (*ver.* 2.) yet it was the *Cauſe*, and not the *Man*, which was to be *juſtified*, or *condemn-*

ed,

ed, by righteous *Judges*, according to its due demerits. We read, *Rom.* 2. 13. *not the hearers of the Law ſhall be juſt before God, but the doers of the Law ſhall be juſtified*; that is, Men ſhall not have praiſe from *God*, for *Hearing*, but for the *Practiſing* of that, which they ſhall know to be their Duty; and the Reaſon the *Apoſtle* gives why *no Man can be juſtified*, (that is, declared worthy of Salvation) *in the ſight of God*, (*Rom.* 3. 20.) is, becauſe by the *Law* is the knowledge of Sin; that is, all who know the *Law* of *God*, muſt needs know that they have ſinned againſt it, and therefore cannot hope that *God* will approve of their Sins, for that is next to Blaſphemy, but that for *Chriſt*'s ſake he will pardon them, which is the higheſt *Juſtification* a Sinner can expect, or deſire. But it is contrary to our firſt *Conceptions* of a *God*, to ſay that *God* can *juſtify* our *Errors*, ſo as to declare his *Approbation* of them, or, for *their ſake*, to *juſtify* our *Choice* of a *ſinful Communion*. If *God* could deceive, we could have no certainty of the *Truth* of our own *Faculties*, or of any *Revelation* made by *him*, and if *he* could be deceived *himſelf*, we could have no Notion of his neceſſary *Exiſtence*; or, if *he* could be pleaſed with our *Error* in matters of Religion, we could frame no conſiſtent Idea of his Perfection, for *Error* is a very great Imperfection in Man, which Man always brings upon himſelf by ſome Immorality or other. Man was created by *God* in a perfect State of Ignorance, but brought himſelf into a State of Ignorance by his own Sin and Wickedneſs. It is therefore as contrary to the Perfection of God to *juſtify Error*, as it is to *juſtify Sin*, the firſt Parent of *Error* in the World. The ſincereſt *Choice* imaginable of a *ſinful Communion*, muſt needs be a *Sin*, and conſequently muſt be contrary to the *Purity*, and *Holineſs* of the *divine Nature*; *Sin*, according to the Doctrine of St. *Paul*, and the Definition of St. *James*, is *a tranſgreſſion of the Law of God*. That Man therefore who trangreſſeth the *Law* of *God*, either *ſingly* by *himſelf*, or in *Society* with *others*, muſt be obnoxious to the divine Diſpleaſure; but *he* who ſinneth in *ſociety* muſt needs be more obnoxious than the *other*. *He* who ſins *ſingly*, may reſolve to repent, (tho' Reſolution is not the whole of Repentance) but *he* who joins himſelf to an *Idolatrous*, (or otherwiſe wicked) *Communion*, is ſuppoſed to reſolve to continue in *that Idolatry*, and Wickedneſs, all the Days of his Life. He who ſins *ſingly*, may be aſhamed of his Sin, in the very Act, or, at leaſt, immediately after; but *he* who joins himſelf to an *Idolatrous Communion*, is ſuppoſed thereby obliged, to approve, and defend, and juſtify *that Idolatry* therein

practiſed,

practiſed, to all others, and bring over as many Proſelytes to his *Error* as he can; (the joining Communion with one Church, and promoting the Intereſt of all others, is but a late politick Invention,) and the more *ſincere he* is, the more earneſt he is in doing the Work of the Devil. *He* who Sins *ſingly*, may ſin but ſeldom, or by ſome ſurprize, violence of Paſſion, and ſtrength of Temptation; but *he* who ſins in *Society*, muſt ſin frequently and earneſtly, with full Reſolution of Mind, and after the moſt mature Deliberation. To ſay therefore that *God*, by the neceſſity of Nature, is bound to *juſtify* thegreateſt Sins of which a Man can be guilty, is to deſtroy the Eſſential *Holineſs* and *Purity* of the *divine Nature*. And to ſay that the *ſincere Choice* of an *idolatrous Communion*, muſt be *juſtified* by *God*, becauſe that the *Sincerity* ſuppoſes a Man has uſed all poſſible means not to be miſtaken, is to excuſe *Man*, and to condemn *God*, by ſuppoſing it poſſible, that a Man ſhould uſe all poſſible and proper means of Information, and yet be forced to chooſe an *Idolatrous*, *Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical Communion*, or obſtinately to remain in it, when it is *choſen*. If this does not deſtroy the firſt rational Conceptions, we can frame of the *goodneſs* of our great *Creator*, and make *him* the firſt Cauſe of Sin, and the Puniſhment attending on it, I muſt begin my Theological Studies again, with a ſearch after the true Definition of *God*, in which I muſt place *infinite Cruelty*, inſtead of *infinite Goodneſs*, nothing being more *cruel*, than to force Men into the *Choice* of an *Idolatrous Communion*, after they have uſed all poſſible and proper means to avoid it.

How far the *Biſhop* runs into this Abſurdity, is plain to all who will read his Sentiments of the Salvation of *Papiſts*, (in his Opinion, no doubt *Idolatrous*.) " I wiſh (ſaith he, " p. 106.) theſe *worthy Perſons* (of the Convocation) had con- " ſidered what is to be found in every *Writer* of our *Church*, " in the *Popiſh Controverſy*; viz. That perfect Uprightneſs " and Sincerity will give *Roman Catholics*, in whom God ſees " theſe good Qualities, a Title to his Favour, amidſt all " their Errors." I know what is ſaid by our *Writers*, concerning the poſſibility of Salvation in the *Church* of *Rome*: But I know nothing ſaid by them, which is agreeable to what the Biſhop ſays. p. 95.) " I think it very proper to " ſay, that a Man's Sincerity, which cannot be ſuppoſed " where a Man does not take all proper Methods of being " rightly informed, will wholly juſtify him before God, in " his making, in the Sincerity of his Heart, the BEST

" Choice

" Choice he can." For here the *Biſhop* plainly ſuppoſes, that there may be a *ſincere Choice* of a *wrong Communion*, and that the *Sincerity* of *that Choice* muſt be accompanied with the uſe of all proper means of Information; that *this Sincerity* wholly juſtifies a Man before *God*, becauſe tho' his *Choice* is *wrong*, yet it is the BEST could be made by him: So that the *Error* is excuſable, becauſe, as he ſays, unavoidable; and it is unavoidable, becauſe *God* has made our Faculties ſo faulty, and placed us in that Situation of Affairs in this Life, that ſome Men muſt fall into *Idolatrous*, *Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical Communions*, after they have uſed all proper and poſſible means to avoid them. Hence the *Biſhop* muſt ſay, that either it is no Sin to chooſe an *Idolatrous Communion*, and perſiſt in it; or that *God* juſtifies the *Sin*, becauſe Men have done all they can to avoid it; that is, becauſe the Fault was in *himſelf*, and not in his *Creature Man*.

Nor will the *Biſhop's* Doctrine of *Sincerity* agree with his ſecond Rule (p. 3.) *viz.* " Whatſoever is contrary to the " plain *Deſign* or *Declarations* of the *Goſpel*, cannot be re- " ceived by any one who believes the *Goſpel*; becauſe it de- " ſtroys the very *Goſpel* which he believes." For I would ask the *Biſhop* and his *Friends*, whether the plain *Deſign* of the *Goſpel* was to ſhew Men the Way to Heaven, by a *True*, or by an *Erroneous Faith*, or indifferently by *either* of them? That is, in plainer Engliſh, by a Belief of *True* or *Falſe Doctrines*, or promiſcuouſly of *Both* together. The Prophet *Iſaiah* foretold that by the Revelation of the *Goſpel*, (Mat. 4. 16.) *The People which ſat in darkneſs ſhould ſee a great light: and to them which ſat in the region and ſhadow of Death, light ſhould ſpring up.* I would again ask the *Biſhop* and his *Friends*, whether God created *Light* to ſhew Men the *true way*, or the *falſe one*, or to make *both* equally ſafe in leading Travelers to the end of their Journey? The pious *Simion*, inſpired by the *Holy Ghoſt*, in a Prophetick Ecſtaſy ſaid, (*Luk.* 2. 32.) that *Chriſt* ſhould be *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, as well as *the glory of his people Iſrael.* Whilſt the *Gentiles* were in Darkneſs, they were in the *ſhadow of Death*, but they were the *Children* of *Light*, when illuminated by the Revelation of thoſe *Truths*, which are contained in *Chriſt's* moſt glorious *Goſpel.* St. *John* ſays, (*John* 1. 4, 5.) *Chriſt was the life, and and the life was the light of Men. The light ſhined in darkneſs, and the darkneſs comprehended it not.* That is, *Chriſt* delivered to Men the Knowledge of the *true way* to Heaven, but the Ignorant loſt their Share of Life and Happineſs.

But

But if we will not believe the *Evangeliſts* let us believe *Chriſt Himſelf*, ſaying, (Joh. 8. 12.) *I am the light of the World, he that followeth me ſhall not walk in darkneſs*, that is, fall into any grievous Error, as a Man in a dark Night is ſafe from Danger, if he follows a true Light. But it is like lighting a Candle at Noon day to prove that the *Goſpel* is a *Light* deſigned by *God* to guide Men into the Knowledge of *Truth*.

Chriſt tells the *Jews* (Joh. 8. 31, 32.) *If ye continue in my word then are ye my Diſciples. And ye ſhall know the truth, and the truth ſhall make you free.* It had been a ſmall Privilege to the *Believing Jews*, to be made *free* by *Truth*, if an hearty or total *Aſſent* to *Error*, had been as available to Eternal Salvation. When St. *Thomas* was doubtful of his way, *Jeſus ſaith to him* (Joh. 14. 6.) *I am the way, and the truth, and the life: No Man cometh unto the Father but by me.* That is, by the profeſſion of *that Truth*, which *I* and my *Spirit* ſhall reveal to him. (Joh. 16. 13.) *Chriſt* promiſes his *Spirit*, to the *Apoſtles*, to *guide them into all truth*. And accordingly St. *Paul* challenges the *Corinthians* to pay *that* Obedience, or Submiſſion of their Underſtanding to *Truth*, as *that* which alone claims our *Aſſent*, as its undoubted and eternal Right. (2 Cor. 4 23.) —— *not handling the Word of God deceitfully, but by manifeſtation of the truth, commending our ſelves to every Man's conſcience. But if our Goſpel be hid*, (that is, not rightly underſtood) *it is hid to them who are loſt*, τοῖς ἀπολλυμένοις, to Men of profligate Lives, who will not pay that Obedience to *Truth*, which natural Conſcience will tell them is due to *it*. For that revealed *Truths*, have the Force of a *Law* to oblige the Conſcience to *Aſſent*, is evident from Gal. 5. 7. *ye did run well, who did hinder you, that ye ſhould not obey the Truth?* Obedience is always due to a preceeding *Law*; where there is a *Rule* or *Law* of *Faith*, the denial of *that Faith* is a Crime, otherwiſe a *total Infidelity* could be no Sin. The *Heretical*, and *Schiſmatical Chriſtians* are therefore Sinners, becauſe they pay not *that* Obedience to a *revealed Truth* which is due to *it*, by the eternal *Laws* of *God* and *Reaſon*. The *Heretick* is a Sinner, becauſe he denies ſome *fundamental Truths*, which are clearly revealed; or, obtrudes ſome *falſe* and *pernicious Doctrines* of *his own*, upon the *Church*, as neceſſary *Articles* of the *Chriſtian Faith*. The *Schiſmatick* is a Sinner, becauſe he embraces ſome *Doctrines* as *true*, which in reality are *falſe* and *erroneous*, and thereby breaks the *Unity* of *Diſci-*

pline in the *Church*, which has a Tendency to break that *Unity* of *Affection*, which *Chriſt* commends to his *Diſciples*. *A new Commandment I give to you that you love one another.* As both of *theſe* are Sinners, neither of *them* can properly be ſaid to be *ſincere*, becauſe *that* Word, in the Scriptural Signification of it, is always ſuppoſed to denote, a *Freedom* of *Thought* and *Action*, from all manner of ſinful, or immoral Pollution. So that to call a Man a *ſincere Heretick*, or a *ſincere Schiſmatick*, is as great an Abuſe of Words, as to call him a *ſincere Thief*, or a *ſincere Adulterer*. The Margents of our Bibles will tell us, that our *Tranſlators* thought that (*Gen.* 17. 2. *Deut.* 18. 13.) *perfect*, *upright*, *ſincere*, *undefiled*. (*Pſal.* 119. 1.) are Synonymous Terms, ſigniying the ſame Rectitude of *Thought*, or *Action*, free from all Immoral Tranſgreſſions of the *Divine Law*. St. *Peter* adviſes Chriſtians (1 *Pet.* 2. 2.) to *deſire the ſincere Milk of the Word, that they might grow thereby.* τὸ λογικὸν ϰ̀ ἄδολον γάλα, The *true* and *undeceitful Milk*, as it might be rendred, from the Original, for that which is *falſe* and *deceitful*, would make them rather grow in *Sin*, than in *Vertue*. To *be ſincere*, and to be *without Offence*, (Phil. 1. 10.) (as all Sins are Offences againſt God,) is the very ſame Thing wherefore *Hereticks*, or *Schiſmaticks*, as ſuch, can't be called *ſincere*, becauſe they do not obſerve that ἀφθορίαν in their Doctrines, which our *Tranſlators* render *Sincerity*, but may denote the avoidance of all Doctrines which tend to the Deſtruction of the Souls of Men, let their Aſſent to falſe Doctrines be never ſo complete and entire.

It is therefore plain, that neither (p. 99.) "*Thoſe* who "are *abſolutely Illiterate and Ignorant*, nor *thoſe* who are moſt "*Learned*," (that is moſt converſant with antient, and mondern Authors) can have any Right to judge againſt the *Truth*; becauſe ſo to do, is always a Breach of the *Laws* of the *Goſpel*, or the *Laws* of *Nature*, to which the *Apoſtles* (the moſt knowing of all Chriſtians) acknowledged themſelves bound and obliged, 2 *Cor.* 13. 8. *we can do nothing againſt the Truth, but for the Truth.* Farther, the *Biſhop* does not ſpeak accurately, when he confounds the Terms of *Illiterate*, and *Ignorant* together, as ſignifying the ſame Thing. The beſt *Lettered Chriſtian* is a ſinful *Heretick* or *Schiſmatick*, when he oppoſes any of thoſe eternal and unalterable *Truths*, which in the *Goſpel* are delivered to us; and the moſt *unlettered Chriſtian*, is a knowing *Chriſtian*, and a good *Chriſtian*, whilſt he embraces the true Doctrines of *Chriſtianity*, or, like the *good Ground* in the *Goſpel*, is ready to receive them, and make

make *Improvement* according to the beſt of his Abilities, tho' this *Improvement* is made by the Advice of their proper Guides. The moſt *Learned Man* is ſo far from having a Title, (upon our Suppoſition) to be the *univerſal Judge*, that he is as ſubject to *Truth*, as the moſt *unlettered Chriſtian*; and when he judgeth contrary to *Truth*, is liable to a greater puniſhment, for much is expected where much is given.

Nor is the *Biſhop's* Conſequence of any Force againſt what I ſay, (p. 99.) "That the *Learned* of *Intermediate Degrees* "muſt no more determine for *themſelves*, in Religion, with- "out the *Judgment* of the *ſupreme Head* of the *Learned* "*World*; than the *Illiterate* and *Ignorant* of the *loweſt Degree*." —— For ſince *Chriſt* has given us a plain Declaration of *all neceſſary Truths* in his holy *Goſpel*, and ſettled a *ſtanding Miniſtry* for the Inſtruction of the *Ignorant*, the unbelief of *thoſe Truths*, is as much a ſinful *Diſobedience* to the *Law* of *Faith*, as *Whoredom* is a breach of the *Law* of *Manners*. And it is as proper to ſay, that the *moſt Learned Man* in the World has a *Right* to commit *Adultery*, if uncleanneſs, in his *private Judgment*, is no Sin, as to ſay that *he*, (or *any other Perſon* of an *intermediate Degree* of Learning) have a *Right* to teach, or believe any *falſe Doctrines*, becauſe in their *private Judgments* they ſeem to be *true*.

I believe therefore the *Biſhop* is miſtaken, when he repreſents it as the Opinion of our beſt *Proteſtant* Writers (p. 106.) "That perfect uprightneſs and Sincerity will give *Roman* "*Catholics*, in whom God ſees theſe good Qualities, a Title "to his Favour amidſt all their Errors." For *perfect uprightneſs* is as inconſiſtent with *groſs Errors*, as Curvity is with a ſtrait Line. They do not teach that the *ſincere Choice* of *Error* juſtifies the *Roman Catholic*, but that the *ſincere Belief* of the moſt *fundamental Truths* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, viz. the Doctrines of the holy and ever-bleſſed Trinity, the Reſurrection of the Dead, and the Practice of Piety towards God, Juſtice to their Neighbours, and Temperance towards themſelves, will be always juſtified by God, in Men of all Perſuaſions, and for the ſake of *thoſe Truths* they profeſs, and *thoſe Chriſtian Vertues* they practiſe; *God* may, for ought we know, in his infinite Mercy, pardon their Sins and Errors, but we can't ſay he will certainly do it, becauſe that would be an Invaſion of *Chriſt's* Prerogative of being the *ſole Judge* (at the laſt Day) of the *quick* and *dead*.

God muſt juſtify, or approve whatſoever is *true* and *good*, and muſt by the ſame Neceſſity of his Nature, hate and abo-

minate whatſoever is *falſe* and *wicked*. When a Man, with an Intention of advancing the Honour of God, and the Salvation of his own Soul, makes *Choice* of an *Erroneous*, or *Idolatrous Communion*, *God* muſt, by the Neceſſity of his Nature, approve of the *Intention*, becauſe it is really *Good*; but, by the ſame Neceſſity of his Nature, he muſt hate the *Action*, becauſe it is morally *Evil*. And therefore the *Apoſtle*, Rom. 3. 8. rejects *thoſe* with the utmoſt indignation who ſay, *Let us do evil that good may come, whoſe damnation is juſt*. If a *total Unbelief* of the *Goſpel* is a Sin, as *Chriſt* ſays, *He who believeth not is condemned already*; then a *partial Unbelief* of *any One Article* (for the Parts are homogeneous to the whole) muſt be ſinful alſo. And I hope that the *Biſhop* will not pretend any expreſs Declaration of the *Goſpel* juſtifies all the actual Tranſgreſſions which flow from it.

I would have the Reader obſerve that this Poſition of the *Biſhops*. (p. 99.) "If *Literature* or *Learning* be intereſted in "the Debate, then the moſt *Learned Man* has certainly a "Title to be the Univerſal Judge of Controverſy," is a *Popiſh* Argument in *Proteſtant* Dreſs, and would be ſerviceable to *Monſieur Pillioniere*, both before and after the Converſion. Before his Converſion He might caſt it into this, or the like Form, *viz*.

Either the moſt *Learned Man* muſt have a *Title* to be the *Univerſal Judge*, or all Men (even the moſt *Unlearned*) muſt judge for *Themſelves*.

But to ſuppoſe that the moſt *Unlearned* have a *Right* to judge for *Themſelves*, is introducive of Anarchy and Confuſion into the *Church* of *Chriſt*.

Therefore the moſt *Learned Man* (which to be ſure the *Papiſts* will ſay is the *Biſhop* of *Rome*) has a *Right* to be the *Univerſal Judge*.

After his Converſion he might caſt it into the following Form or Syllogiſm, *viz*.

Either every *Private Man* muſt have *Right* to judge for *Himſelf*, (in the *Choice* of a *Communion*) or the moſt *Learned Man* muſt have a *Title* to be the *Univerſal Judge*.

But the moſt *Learned Man* has no Title to be the *Univerſal Judge*.

Therefore every Man has a *Right* to chooſe a *Communion* (or as many *Communions* as he pleaſes) for Himſelf.

Utrum horum mavis Accipe.

I muſt confeſs it would be matter of Aſtoniſhment to me, to hear a *Biſhop*, by many reputed the *beſt Scholar* in the World, making

making ſuch ſharp Invectives againſt *Learning*, if there were not ſome apparent Reaſons for it. He ſays, (p. 98.) "That "nothing has been ſeen to adminiſter ſo many Doubts, and "ſo many Differences (in Religion) as *Learning*; nor that "any, in Experience, are ſeen to be leſs ſecure from Error, "than *Learned* Men. And (p 99.) He obſerves that *Learn-* "*ed Men* are conſtantly differing, and eternally wrangling "with one another."

If the Improvement of *Reaſon*, and the Knowledge of *Hiſtory*, are the moſt valuable Parts of *Learning*, I know nothing of *Either*, that deſerves theſe ſevere Reflections. The Practical Inference to be made from them, by his *Adored Laity*, would end in demoliſhing thoſe *Schools*, or *Nurſeries* of *Learning* called *Univerſities*, wherein eternal wrangling is maintained; and aboliſhing the Order of the *Clergy*, the Great *Advocates* and *Supporters* of *Humane Learning*. But theſe are but trivial Conſiderations to *Thoſe*, who would introduce a new *Form* of *Government* into the *Church*, unknown to *thoſe* who are acquainted with the ancient *Laws* and *Cuſtoms* of *Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline*. It is *their* Intereſt that all who are skilful in *Antiquity* ſhould be ſent away into foreign Plantations, that the moſt *Illiterate honeſt Men*, more capable of Judging than *General Councils*, may erect *Churches* according to the various Models of *private Judgment*, without any moleſtation from the Lovers of *Antiquity* in Religion; and every *Enthuſiaſt* acquieſce in his *private Illuminations* without oppoſition from *Learned Tyrants*, who would impoſe upon *them* the intolerable Yokes of *Truth* and *Reaſon*.

The *Biſhop* indeed ſays, (*p.* 99.) That "to acquaint the "moſt *Illiterate* with the plain Declarations of *Jeſus Chriſt*; "and to refer them to thoſe plain Declarations, is not to "make them their own ſole Judges and Directors, but to "lead them to Chriſt as their Director." But I ſay, that to refer them to their *private Judgment*, and to make *that* the *dernier Reſort* of all Controverſy, is to lead them to the *Chriſt within them*, and not *that Chriſt without them*, who left one ſtanding and immutable *Rule* of *Truth* to all Perſons. And to ſend them to the *Chriſt within them* is meer *Quakeriſm*, and *Quakeriſm* is only *Deiſm*, in the diſguiſe of Scriptural Phraſe and Language. For the *Chriſt without them*, who died at *Jeruſalem*, tho' *he* preached to the *Illiterate* and *Ignorant*, yet *he* did not make them the *Judges* of his Diſcourſes. If they *believed the Truth*, they were to be *ſaved*; if they *believed not*, they were to be *damned*, whatever their

private

private Judgments might dictate to the contrary. The *Chriſt without them*, left plain Declarations of what diſpoſitions of Mind are neceſſarily preparatory for the *Kingdom of Heaven*, in thoſe eight Beatitudes pronounced upon the Mount, ſix of which I have ſhewn to be *Eccleſiaſtical*, as well as *ſocial Vertues*, preparing Men for the *Kingdom of Heaven*, by paying a due ſubmiſſion to *thoſe* who are ſet over us in the Lord, and not by erecting a Throne for *private Judgment*, above *all Thrones*, and *Principalities*, and *Powers*, over *Truth*, and that is over *Chriſt himſelf*, who is *the truth, the way, and the Life*.

It is obſerveable that *Men* of *all Denominations*, do themſelves, in this point of the Controverſy, conſtantly appeal to this *private Judgment*, which they afterwards ſo much exclaim againſt; whereas 'tis plain, no Man in his Senſes, can appeal to *private*, or *publick Judgment*,, but to the *Truth* that is in the Things themſelves, which a Man always ſuppoſes as viſible to *others* as *himſelf*. When a *Proteſtant* diſputes with a *Papiſt*, he does not tell the *Papiſt* that the Doctrine of *Tranſubſtantiation* is *falſe*, becauſe it is contrary to his own *private Judgment*, for then the *Papiſt* would have as good an Argument on his ſide, *viz.* that it is certainly *true*, becauſe it is agreeable to *his private Judgment*, and then the Doctrine would be *true*, and *falſe* at the ſame time. But the *Proteſtant* appeals to *all that Evidence* of *Truth*, which is in *Reaſon*, and *common Senſe*; the *Papiſt* to *all that Evidence* of *Truth*, which is in the *Scriptures* as they are expounded by the preſent *Church* of *Rome*. But both agree that the belief of *Truth* is more acceptable to *God*, than the belief of *Error*, otherwiſe why ſhould they contend ſo earneſtly about it. When the *Papiſt* urges the *Proteſtant* to ſubmit *private Judgment* to the *Judgment* of the *Roman See*, it is upon this ſuppoſition, that the *Church* of *Rome* can teach him nothing but what is *True*, and that the belief of Truth is always well pleaſing to *God*, as the belief of *Error* is diſpleaſing to *him*; but neither of them, in their Senſes, will ſay, that either *private*, or *publick Judgment* can alter that *Truth* which was in the things themſelves, and precedaneous to that *publick*, or *private Judgment* paſt upon them ; or that *private*, or *publick Judgment* will juſtify a Man before *God*, in the denial of the moſt *fundamental Articles* of the *Chriſtian Religion*. For this overthrows all diſtinction between *true* and *falſe Doctrines*, or at leaſt the main diſtinction of all, which conſiſts in this, that the *one* have a tendency to Death, the *other* to Life everlaſting. Take away this diſtinction and

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the moſt neceſſary *Truths* of the *Goſpel* will dwindle into vain and empty Speculations, which may be affirmed, or denied, without any Prejudice to the Souls of Men, and the *dernier Reſort* of all Controverſies will be to the *private Judgment* of every *Chriſtian*, however enlightned by *Truth*, or darkned by *Error*.

(*Pag.* 101.) The *Biſhop* blames thoſe who " decry *private* " *Judgment*, without which (he ſays) neither *Chriſtianity* " could ever have been received, nor the *Church* of *England*, " particularly, ever have been in being. " But thoſe are more to be blamed who exalt *private Judgment* above *Truth*, if not above *God himſelf*. For *Appeals* being from a *lower* to an *higher Court*, it the *laſt Appeal* in matters of Religion, is to *private Judgment*, then *private Judgment*, muſt juſtify not only *all Erroneus Opinions*, as well as *thoſe* which are *true*, but alſo muſt conſtrain *God himſelf* to be the Executioner at the laſt Day, of *that* Sentence which every Man's *private Judgment* paſſes upon *himſelf*; ſo that God will have nothing to do to *judge* the *World* according to *Truth* and *Righteouſneſs*, but according to every *private Man's* Opinion, which no doubt will be ſo favourable to *himſelf* that no *Heretick*, or *Schiſmatick* need ever fear eternal Damnation.

The *Biſhop* ſays (*ib.*) " I know of no middle Way, either " Men muſt be left to their *private Judgment* (which al- " ways ſuppoſes them to take in all aſſiſtances towards it) " in the *Choice* of a particular *Church Communion*, or they " muſt be abſolutely determined in it by their Superiors. " I anſwer, that there is a natural Neceſſity that every Man's *private Judgment* ſhould determine whether he may lawfully aſſent to the *publick Determinations* of *any particular Church*, or no, but both *publick* and private *Determinations* are ſubject to the plain Declarations of the *Goſpel* of *Truth*; ſo that if the *Choice* of a *Communion* (or, Perſeverance in it when choſen) is good, or bad, according as the *Faith* profeſſed in that *Communion* which is choſen *true* or *falſe*, every *private Man* muſt make his *Choice* at his own Peril. Many of the *Jews* and *Gentiles* did in their *private Judgment*, ſincerely believe that *Jeſus* was the true *Meſſiah*, without which, there could have been no *Chriſtian Church*; as many of our *Countrymen* at the *Reformation*, did ſincerely believe that many of the *Doctrines* of the *Church* of *Rome* were erroneous, or there could have been no *Church* of *England*; but ſtill this *Faith* could not have juſtified the *Jews*, if *Chriſt* had been an Impoſtor, neither could the *ſincere Perſuaſion* of our *firſt Re-*

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formers have juſtified their ſeperation from the *Church* of *Rome*, if *all her Doctrines* had been agreeable to *that Truth* which is revealed to us in the Scriptures. Hence it is eaſy to ſhew the *Biſhop* that *middle Way* which he thinks impoſſible, and to demonſtrate that his Doctrine of *Sincerity* is contrary to his third Rule, *viz.* (*p.* 3.) "Whatſoever is contradictory to thoſe *Fundamental Principles* of the *Reformation*, "without which it could never have been at firſt, and "now can never be defended, cannot knowingly be received "by *any true Proteſtant*.

The Determination of this Point being of the higheſt moment to the Intereſts of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, and of the whole *Reformation*, is what I ſhall proceed to diſcuſs, after I have made one brief Obſervation, *viz.* That whereas the *Biſhop* frequently in his Book is pleaſed to honour the *lower Houſe* of *Convocation* with the Title of a *learned Body*, it muſt appear from his own Words, that he can mean no more thereby than a *Body of Men* who by *Learning* are rendred leſs capable of *Judging* between *Truth* and *Falſhood* than the moſt *Illiterate* and *Ignorant* Plough-man.

I proceed then to ſhew that both *Chriſtianity*, and the *Church* of *England*, might have had a *Being*, without *every Man*'s being left to his *private Judgment*, or being *abſolutely* determined by his *Superiors* in the *Choice* of a *Church Communion*. Nay, both of them had a very viſible Exiſtence, before the Notion of *Juſtification* by the *Sincerity* of the *Choice* of a *wrong Communion* was known in the World.

It is plain our firſt *Reformers*, and the moſt eminent *Defenders* of the *Reformation*, did never run into that extremity of Folly, as to think that they could juſtify their *ſeparation* from the *Church* of *Rome*, by the *Authority* of every Man's *private Judgment*, over any *publick Determinations*, but by that *Truth* that is in the *Nature* of *Things*, antecedent to either *private*, or *publick Determinations*, and ſuperior to them; and which had brightneſs enough in *itſelf*, to ſhine by *its own Light* in the Eyes of all thoſe, who were not blinded by *Prejudice*, or *Pride*, or *worldly Intereſt*, or ſome other *evil Affection* of the *Mind*. None of them ever ſaid that an *Heretick*, or *Schiſmatick* had made the *beſt Choice* he could for himſelf, and that by the *Sincerity* of that *Choice* (p. 95.) he was *juſtified* before *God*; But they reproved *thoſe* who continued in an *erroneus Communion*, for that *Negligence*, *Pride*, and *Arrogance*, which they thought were the immediate Cauſes of their *Error*. They never taught that the *private Judg-*

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ment of the *Papiſts* would *juſtify* them as well before *God* in the midſt of all their *Errors*, (which yet is an unavoidable Conſequence of the *Biſhop's* Doctrine) as the *private Judgment* of a *Proteſtant*, in the Profeſſion of true Chriſtian Doctrines. If they had done ſo, they could never have *juſtified* their *Separation*, from Aſſent, to the *publick Determinations* of their *Popes* and *Councils*, if *thoſe Determinations* had not been contrary to the *Truths* that, once for all, were *delivered to the Saints*. As they did not run into that extreme of believing, that *any Judgment*, or *Sentence* of their *Superiors* in the *Church*, could oblige Men to join *Communion* with an *erroneus Church*, (for general Councils, the higheſt of all Eccleſiaſtical Authorities, may err,) ſo neither did they run ſo far into the other extreme, as to ſay that *every Man* was to be left to his *private Judgment*, and that the *Sincerity* of his *Choice* would *juſtify* him in *all* (or *any* of) the *Errors* of an *Idolatrous*, *Heretical* or *Schiſmatical Communion*. For they embraced the *Truth*, which lay between theſe two extremes of *Error*, viz. That neither *private*, nor *publick Judgment* could *juſtify* the *Choice* of a *ſinful Communion*: Tho' *God*, by the *Infinity* of his *uncovenanted Mercy*, might pardon (in conſideration of their other Vertues) not only the Sins of Ignorance, but even ſome of the wilful Tranſgreſſions of his People; otherwiſe we ſhould drive all Mankind into an utter Deſpair of their eternal Salvation, (as Mr. *Chillingworth* well obſerves) *foraſmuch as all have ſinned, and fallen ſhort of the Glory of God*.

Our *Reformation* began with the Aboliſhment of the *Papal Juriſdiction*, not becauſe it was contrary to the *Judgment* of *private Men*, or the *Sentiments* of *King* and *Parliament*, but becauſe it had no Foundation of *Truth* in the *Holy Scriptures*; and therefore not to be ſupported by the *Authority* of either *publick* or *private Judgment*, neither of which at that time were wanting towards the Juſtification of it.

The Publication of the *Scriptures* in a *known Tongue*, was another Step towards a *glorious Reformation* of *erroneous Doctrines*; But this Publication of the *Scriptures* was not to exalt the *Authority* of *private Judgment* above *Truths* therein contained, but rather to bring both *private*, and what we call *publick Judgment*, to a due Subjection to thoſe *Rules* of *Faith*, which *God* himſelf hath preſcribed to us. Now there can be but *one Faith*, by which we are *juſtified*, and that muſt be by a firm Aſſent to *Truth*, and not to *Falſhood*, otherwiſe the Publication of the *Scriptures* had been to no purpoſe.

When upon this Publication of these *Scriptures*, several *Protestant Doctrines* began to appear in Treatises then wrote; the *King*, who was altogether *Roman* in every Thing, but the maintenance of the *Pope's Supremacy*, was pleased to call a *Convention* of his *great Men* (See *Fox's* Annals, p. 1342. *a.*) to censure those scandalous *Libels* which any ways opposed the current Doctrines of the *Church* of *Rome*. Accordingly they met together, and drew up *a Bill*, as Mr. *Fox* calls it, wherein they censured several Books, *viz.* The *Obedience of a Christian Man*; the *sum of the Scriptures*, &c. and amongst the rest the *New Testament in English*; (of *Tyndal's* Translation) admonishing all Christian People to detest and abhor them, as pernicious Books, and deliver them to their *Superiors*, in order to be suppressed, or burnt, at their Discretion.

Tyndal's New Testament was not censured for the Faults of the *Translation*, but for the *Translation* it self into the *vulgar Tongue*, which being not pleasing to *those* who placed their hopes of Salvation, in a *sincere* (as the Bishop calls it) *Adherence* to *Popish Errors*, they shut up the *Light* of the *Scriptures*, &c. to prevent the Labour in searching out the *Truth*, which in those *Holy Writings* is recommended to us.

But *Hugh Latimer*, the most exact Pattern of *Antient Sincerity* that ever was in the World, could not agree to this *Suppression* of *Truth*, to secure the *sincere Profession* of *Error*; but inflamed with Zeal to see the *New Testament* condemned amongst the most scandalous *Libels* of that Age, for no other Reason than because it was the Store-house, and Magazine of all necessary Truths; He wrote a Letter to King *Henry* VIII. (Acts and Mon. p. 1344. *a.*) wherein he saith, (from St. *Austin*) "He which for any Power hideth the "Truth, provoketh the wrath of God." And (from *John Chrysostom*) "That he is not only a Traitor to the Truth, "which openly for the Truth teacheth a Lie, but he also "who doth not pronounce and shew the Truth that he "knoweth." And a little after—"For what Thing is to "be a Traitor to Truth, than to be a Traitor and Judas to Christ, who is the very Truth and cause of all Truth." And afterwards, complaining of those *Prelates*, and *great Men* who interdicted the *Use* of the *Scriptures* to the *Laity*, he says, "They will neither shew the Truth themselves (as they be "bound) nor suffer them that would." They who will read this Fragment of an *Epistle* at large, will find, that good old *Latimer* did not fix the *Reformation*, upon the *Authority* of either *publick*, or *private Judgment*, but upon *Truth* it-

itſelf, ſuppoſing, where *Truth* was, there was the *Authority* of *Chriſt*; and where it was not, there no *Authority* of *Men*, could *juſtify* our *Aſſent* to *Error*.

Mr. *Fox* (p. 1379. of his Acts and Mon.) gives us a Letter of Biſhop *Ridley's* to Dr. *Weſt* once his *Chaplain*, wherein that pious *Martyr* wiſhes to his *quondum Chaplain*, the grace of God, and love of Truth, which in his Senſe is the ſame with the love of Chriſt. "I am perſuaded, (ſaith he) Chriſt's Words "to be true," *whoſoever ſhall confeſs me before Men, him alſo will I confeſs before my Father which is in Heaven.* He puts him in mind, (p. 1380. *b.*) of the promiſes he had made, whilſt he was his *Lordſhip's Proteſtant Domeſtic Chaplain*, of preaching *God's Word*, and his *Truth*; he ſays, "That although "Men do vary and change, as the Moon, yet God's Word "is ſtable, and abideth for evermore." This *Holy Martyr* therefore did not place his Hopes of Salvation, in *private*, or *publick Opinion*, which is various, inconſtant, and ſometimes inconſiſtent with it ſelf, but in the Belief of that *Truth* in *Chriſt*, which is *the ſame yeſterday, to day, and for evermore.* He reprehends thoſe who in King *Edward's* time taught that the *Prayers* of the *Church* ought to be in the *vulgar Tongue*, and in Queen *Mary's* time altered their Opinion. "If then (ſaith he) it was a Truth of God's Word, think you the Al- "teration of the World can make it an untruth?" Now if the Alteration of the whole World can't alter the neceſſary Effects of *Truth*, the Alteration of *any one private Man's* Opinion muſt needs make a leſſer Alteration, than a *publick Sentence*, and every Man muſt ſtand, or fall by the *Truth*, and not by the bare *Sincerity* of his *private Opinion*. So ſacred was the Obligation of *Truth* to this learned *Martyr*, that he is not afraid to ſay, "He that will willingly or wilfully forſake any "one open Truth of God's Word, if he be conſtrained, will "aſſuredly forſake God, and all his Truth, For what is "it (as he ſays, *ib.*) to confeſs, or deny Chriſt in this World, "but to maintain the Truth contained in God's Word?

Mr. *Bradford*, (p. 1179.) after his Condemnation to the Stake, wrote a Letter to the Men of *Lancaſhire*, and *Cheſhire*, wherein he acquaints them, that his Enemies thought by his Death, to hinder others from preaching Chriſt truly to them, but he doubted not but his heavenly Father, would, by his Death, confirm them more in his Truth than ever. "When I conſider (ſaith he) the cauſe of my Condemnation, "I cannot but lament, that I do not more rejoice than I do, "for it is God's verity and truth, ſo that the Condemnation "is not of *Bradford* ſimply, but rather a Condemnation of "Chriſt and his Truth."

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Now I would fain know whether these *Martyrs*, were the *Martyrs* of *private Opinion*, or of that *Truth* which is antecedent to *all humane Opinions* whatsoever. If they died only *Martyrs* to *private Opinion*, or that *sovereign Right* of *private Judgment*, which the *Bishop* so strenuously asserts, they deserved no more Honour, or Reward, than *Servetus*, or *Vaninus*, who fell as *Martyrs* to theirs. And if *Sincerity* of *Choice*, *equally justifies all Communions*, the *Papists*, who put them to death, were in as safe a Condition, in relation to eternal Happiness, as these poor *Martyrs*, who suffered death for the *Truth* of the *Protestant Doctrines* of the blessed Sacrament; since, in all probability, Queen *Mary* and her *Council*, were as fully persuaded of the *Truth* of the *Popish Doctrine* of *Transubstantiation*, as these *Martyrs* were persuaded, that it was altogether *false* and *erroneous*.

From *Protestant Martyrs*, let us proceed to *Protestant Champions*, who defended the *Reformation* after it was established by the *Ecclesiastical* and *Civil Laws* of the Nation. I will begin with Mr. *Chillingworth*, tho' not one of the first in time, yet one of the first in sound Judgment, and close Argumentation, of all the *Protestant Champions*. The *Jesuit*, whom he opposed, began his Attack upon the *Protestants*, by asserting that to *separate* from the *Church* in *any Point*, is *Heresy* or *Schism*; and that therefore the *Protestants* could not believe that *Papists* could be saved, if the *Popish Religion* was false, and *their own* was true, for if it was a damnable Sin to refuse Belief to *any one Article* revealed by *God*, then there could not be any greater *Heresy*, or ground of *Heresy*, than a Persuasion that Men of different Religions might be saved, (p. 2. Sect. 6.) From hence the *Jesuit* thought it plain, that the *Protestants* must be in a State of Damnation, for denying the *Truths* of *God*, as the *Romish Church* delivered them; and that the *Protestants* were inconsistent with themselves, in allowing a *Possibility* of Salvation, and at the same time charged them with a Belief of false Doctrines. The great *Chillingworth* did not defend the *Protestants*, by saying, that *Papists* were *justified* by the *Sincerity* of their Belief, as the *Protestants* were by the *Sincerity* of theirs, whether true or false; but by shewing his Adversary, that there is a Distinction between *Points fundamental*, and *not fundamental*, that *Error* in *Points not fundamental* is indeed *a Sin*, yet such *a Sin* as is pardonable by a general Repentance, and that therefore it might be pardonable in *Papists*, because the *fundamental Truths* which they retain, might be an Antidote against their Sins of Ignorance; (p. 7.) and that the Hope of Salvation could

could not be ill grounded, which requires a Repentance of thoſe Sins and Errors we fall into by humane Frailty. He aſſerts *he* is no Friend to indifferency in Religion, who gives *them* hope of pardon of *Errors*, who are deſirous, and induſtrious to find the *Truth*.

From hence it is plain, that *Chillingworth* is ſo far from aſſerting that a Man is *wholly juſtified* by the ſincerity of his *Heart* (p. 95.) in the *Choice* of an *erroneous Communion*, that he ſuppoſes the *Choice* of *Error* always to be a Sin, (Man being as much obliged to believe what *God* ſays to be true, as to do whatſoever he commands, or avoid whatſoever is forbidden by him,) but ſuch a Sin as *God* may pardon, either for the general repentance of a Man for all his Sins, when he has the misfortune to die in Ignorance; or a particular repentance for every individual Sin of Ignorance, when he lives to be enlightned with the ſaving knowledge of the Truth. The *Jeſuit* ſuppoſes, that the *Roman Church* taught nothing but the *Truth*, and that therefore the *Proteſtants* were in a damnable Sin, for not believing *thoſe Truths*, which his *Church* taught them. The *Proteſtant Champion* does not deny, that the *disbelief* of *Truth* is a *Sin*, and all Sins without the interpoſition of the Divine Mercy, are damnable in their own Natures; but he affirms, that in things *not fundamental*, they are ſuch Sins as *God* may pardon, upon Condition of a general, or particular Repentance, on which he grounds the *Poſſibility*, (without ſaying much of the *Probability*) of a *Papiſt's Salvation*. Nor does he ground the hopes of Pardon, upon the *ſincerity* of the *Choice*, but upon *Belief* of thoſe *fundamental Truths* which are retained in the *Romiſh Communion*, with which *God* may be ſo far pleaſed, as, for the ſake of them, to pardon the *additional Errors* which they have tacked to the *antient Creeds*.

In every part of this admirable Diſcourſe he endeavours to prove, that the *Church* of *Rome* is not *infallible*, in propoſing a *Rule* of *Faith*, and that *her particular Doctrines* being *falſe*, no *Authority* of *Popes*, or *Councils*, could make the *belief* of them *neceſſary* to *thoſe* who are *Members* of the *Proteſtant Communion*, nor hinder their being ſinful to them. He ſays we are bound by the *Love* of *God*, and the *Love* of *Truth*, to be zealous for *all Truths*, that are any ways *profitable*, tho' not *abſolutely neceſſary*. That *Errors* which do not merit, and *erring* from *profitable Truths*, may lead Men into *mortal Errors*. Theſe are the *Doctrines* of the great *Chillingworth*, but our great *Biſhop* is of a Judgment quite oppoſite to all of them. (p. 101.

(*p.* 101. of his Book, he argues,) " That Men muſt be left " to the *Choice* of a particular *Church Communion*, becauſe " otherwiſe they muſt be determined in it by their *Supe-* " *riors*, " which laſt in his Opinion is abſurd, becauſe in *Chriſt's Kingdom*, no *one Chriſtian* has *Authority* over the *Conſcience* of another. And if *God* hath left *every Chriſtian* to the *free Choice* of a particular *Church Communion*, then the *Errors* of that *Communion*, whether it is *Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical*, cannot be ſinful, nor prejudicial to the Perſon who chooſes it, for he only makes uſe of that *Liberty* wherein *Chriſt has made him free*. Neither is he to be pardon'd by a general Repentance for Sins of Ignorance, but by the firm Perſuaſion that the *Doctrines* of that *Communion* are true.

That I do not herein miſrepreſent the *Biſhop's* Doctrine, I appeal to his own Words (*p.* 102,) " If the *Perſuaſion* of Men, " after the moſt ſincere ſearch after Truth and Right, were " not the thing which juſtified *them* before God, in leav- " ing the *Church* of *Rome*, at the beginning of the *Refor-* " *mation*, then let it be ſaid what it was. "

I anſwer, it was the *Truth* of *our own Doctrines*, and the *Falſity* of *theirs*, which alone could *juſtify* our *ſeparation* from *them*. The *Romaniſts* wanted no *humane Authority* in the Reign of *Queen Mary*, and if *Truth* had been on their ſide, our pretended *Reformation* had been nothing more than *a real Schiſm*, if not a *formal Hereſy*.

But the *Biſhop* ſays in the ſame place, that " the *Corrup-* " *tion* of that *Church*, conſidered in itſelf, could not be the " *Point*, becauſe this could juſtify only *thoſe* who were *per-* " *ſuaded* of that Corruption, in their *Separation*; not *thoſe* " who were not perſuaded it was at all corrupt; who would " not therefore, by *this* be juſtified in leaving it. "

I anſwer, none, but Wretches of the firſt magnitude, could leave a *ſinful Communion*, if they were *perſuaded* there was nothing *ſinful* in it. But let their *perſuaſion* be what it will, they are *Sinners* whilſt they remain in a *ſinful Communion*; (for they are the *Individuals* of a *Communion*, and not the *Community*, which is but an *Ens Rationis*, which are capable of ſinning againſt *God*) and if they are ſaved; it is (accordign to Mr. *Chillingworth* and the Truth in ſelf) as other Sinners are, by an hearty and ſincere Repentance, with this difference only, *viz.* that we may conceive *Sins* of *Ignorance* to be more eaſily *pardonable*, than *Sins* againſt plain and diſtinct *Knowledge*.

And now the Biſhop proceeds to the boaſted Demonſtration, (*p.* 103.) viz. *That*, which if you take away, (*ſincere* *per-*

perſuaſion) Men are left *unjuſtified* in their Conduct, (his meaning is, if men joyn themſelves to *any Communion*, which they are *perſuaded* is *unlawful*, they are *Sinners* againſt *God*) and give them, or ſuppoſe them to have, a *ſincere Perſuaſion*; (that is, when they are fully *perſuaded* that the *Terms* of a *Communion* are *lawful*) they are *juſtified* in their Conduct; (that is, they are not *Sinners* againſt *God*,) tho' they have the misfortune to *chooſe* a very *erroneous and corrupt Communion*. That I do him no wrong, take his Demonſtration in his own Words. " *That* therefore, which if you take away, " Men are left *unjuſtified* in their Conduct; (he is ſpeaking " of *ſincere Perſuaſion*) and, which if you give them again, " they are *juſtified* in their Conduct; upon *that* it is, " that their proper, and particular *Juſtification*, in the Eyes " of God, muſt depend. It is an eaſy matter to call this a " *pretended Demonſtration*, but not ſo eaſy to ſhew that it " fails in the Point aimed at by it.

I anſwer, The Point aimed at by it is to ſhew, that a *ſincere Perſuaſion juſtifies* the Members of *all Communions*, in the Profeſſion of contrary, and repugnant Doctrines. But the Point the *Biſhop* ought to have aimed at, was to ſhew that *nothing* but the *Profeſſion* of *true* and *ſound Doctrines* can *juſtify* us before *God*; and that *all Errors* are either *damnable*, if they are in *fundamentals*, or very *dangerous* to Men's Salvation, even in *leſſer Matters*; becauſe *one Error* naturally tends to the begetting of *another*, and many *little Errors*, joined together, may form ſo black a Cloud of Darkneſs, as may hinder a Man from ſeeing the great Difference between *moral Good*, and *moral Evil*. According to the Point aimed at in this *pretended Demonſtration*, Thoſe *Romaniſts* who were not *perſuaded*, at the *Reformation*, of the *ſinfulneſs* of their *Communion*, were in as ſafe a Condition, as thoſe *Reformers* who were *perſuaded* of it, and made the *Separation*. And the like may be ſaid of all other *Diſſenting Communions*; For *God* cannot judge them according to the *Truth* that is in the *Things* themſelves, but according to the *Apprehenſions*, and *Perſuaſions* of *Thoſe* who are the *Members* of *thoſe diſſenting Communions*; The *Belief* of *Tranſubſtantiation* was not hurtful to the credulous *Papiſt*, nor the *Denial* of it to the more ſcrupulous *Proteſtant*. All which if Mr. *Chillingworth* had believed as firmly as the *Biſhop*, there had been no need of any farther Diſpute of the *Judge* of *Controverſy*, or the *Truth* of any particular *Doctrine*, for *Truth* and *Falſhood* would have given each an *equal Title* to the *Favour* of *God*, if poſſeſſed with an

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equal ſhare of *ſincere Perſuaſion*. This is like the Philoſophy of a certain *Iriſh Man*, who affirmed there was no reality in any Thing without us, but only in our own internal Idea's, when we are a ſleep, all the external World is in a State of Annihilation, but when we are by any Accident awaked, it returns to its former Exiſtence, by the Idea's it impreſſes upon us. And thus it fares with all the *Articles* of the *Chriſtian Faith*; they are *true*, and *juſtifying Articles* whilſt we have a *firm Perſuaſion* of the *Truth*, but when our *Perſuaſion* is altered, the *contrary Tenents* are as *juſtifying* as the *other*, according to the *Biſhop's* Scheme of the Chriſtian Religion.

He has therefore no Reaſon to complain, that the *Committee* charges it upon him, as his Principle (p. 103.) "That, "no one Method of Religion is, in it ſelf, preferable to "another." For tho', as he ſays, "they can find no ſuch "Poſition in any Part of his Writings," yet if a *ſincere Perſuaſion*, which is common to ſome of all Religions, does *equally juſtify them all*, then they muſt needs be *equal* in reſpect to *Juſtification* before *God*, tho' they may be different in Relation to ſome circumſtantial Accidents of *Faith* and *Worſhip*. And tho' the *Biſhop* does poſitively affirm, (p. 104.) that "one Method of Religion is preferable to another, "and that, therefore, we ought, to the utmoſt of our Pow-"ers and Capacities, to chuſe that *one Method*, which is the *Beſt*:" yet if that is always *beſt* in itſelf, which a Man *ſincerely* chooſes, in Relation to his own *Juſtification* before *God*; Then, foraſmuch as Men of *equal Sincerity* may *chooſe* (or *remain* in a) different *Communion* of repugnant *Faith* and *Practice*, each *Communion* may be *Beſt* and *Worſt* in its Turn, according as the *Perſuaſion* of the *chooſer* alters, or according as *different Men* have *different* or *repugnant Sentiments* of them.

But the *Biſhop* ſays (*ib.*) that "the contrary Suppoſition "reduces to this great Abſurdity, that the moſt Honeſt and "Upright Man upon the Earth, tho' never ſo ſincerely deſi-"rous of finding the true way, if thro' any Weakneſs or In-"capacity he Errs, is thrown out of God's Favour, which "ever way he acts.

I anſwer, that Mr. *Chillingworth*, and other *Defenders* of the *Reformation*, do not ſay that he, who, by Miſtake, prefers a *worſe* to a *Better Communion*, is thrown out of *God's Favour* into *Hell Fire*, the only Place exempted from *God's Favour*, but that he is thrown into a *ſinful State*, wherein he cannot be ſaved but by the Mercy of God, and his own true Repen-

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tance. Neither do they ever ſuppoſe, that the *moſt upright Man* on the Face of the Earth, may by *weakneſs* and *incapacity*, join himſelf to the *worſt* of *Churches*; (that is to the moſt Erroneous) For they ſuppoſe that *God* has given thoſe diſtinguiſhing Marks between *Truth* and *Falſhood*, that none can chooſe the *Worſt* of *Churches*, but the *worſt* of *Men*, and that thoſe who put *Darkneſs* for *Light*, and *Light* for *Darkneſs*, are, either in a ſinful State liable to Damnation, (for a *Woe* is pronounced againſt Them,) by their *own Fault*; or by mere *weakneſs* or *incapacity*, as the *Biſhop* would have it, which *weakneſs* and *incapacity*, (as he calls them) our Sons of the *Eſtabliſhed Church* never aſcribed to the *Author* of their Beings, (for that treads hard upon the Heels of Blaſphemy) but to the *ſinful Neglect*, or *vitious Affections* of *Thoſe* who *chooſe*, or *remain* in an *Erroneous Communion*. Whereas the *Biſhop* ſuppoſes no Member of an *Erroneous Communion* in a ſinful State, whilſt he is *ſincerely* perſuaded of the Goodneſs of his *Communion*, which has at leaſt a Tendency to render Men careleſs, whether the *Doctrines* of their *Communion* are *true* or *falſe*, ſince They are to be *juſtified* not by the *Truth*, but by the *Sincerity* or Firmneſs of their *private Judgment* or Perſuaſion.

In vain therefore does the *Biſhop* ſay (p. 105) "that there "*is an Excellency of One Communion above Another*; —— and "that it is of the utmoſt Importance to Men to uſe all "their Endeavours to make the *Beſt Choice*." For how can it be of the utmoſt Importance to make the *Beſt Choice*, if the *Worſt Choice*, made in *Sincerity*, will *juſtify* as well as the *other*. He ſuppoſes it abſur'd to imagine (p. 104) that "he who joins himſelf to the *Worſt Church*, (*i. e.* the moſt "Erroneous Communion) ſhould be loſt meerly for the *Error* of his *Choice*." But if *Error* will not hurt him, there is no Reaſon why it ſhould be a Matter of the *utmoſt Importance*, to find out the *Truth*. The Search after *Truth* is ſo very laborious, that Men will rather chooſe to ſit down in the *Doctrines* of *That Communion* in which They are bred up, (which is the Caſe of moſt Men) whether *true* or *falſe*, than trouble their Heads with an operoſe Enquiry after the *Truth*, when they are inſtructed that there is no Danger of being loſt by *Error*.

To compleat this boaſted Demonſtration, the *Biſhop* adds (*ib.*) "That he who joins himſelf to the very *Beſt Com-* "*munion, againſt* the Dictates of his Conſcience, and *con-* "*trary* to his own *Perſuaſion*; is certainly a *wilful Sinner*

" in the Eyes of God. " From whence he would tacitly infer, that he who chooſes the *Worſt Communion*, according to the Dictates of his Conſcience, is thereby *juſtified* before *God*. Whereas the Reaſon why *he* who joins himſelf to the very *Beſt Communion*, againſt the Dictates of his Conſcience, is a *Wilful Sinner*, is becauſe he is a *Liar* to *God* and *Man*, and *God hateth every one that loveth or maketh a Lie*. For *he* who chooſes *any particular Communion*, does thereby virtually declare to *God* and *Man*, that he thinks it to be the *Beſt* extant; (for nothing leſs than that can juſtify his *Choice*) But if his Conſcience tells him otherwiſe, or give him leave to write againſt his own Subſcriptions, or claim a Power over Others which he thinks not to be his Due, or to give clancular Aſſiſtance to Thoſe Enemies who would deſtroy it, he is a *Sinner*, as he is a *Liar* and an *Hypocrite* before *God* and *Man*. But *he* who chooſes an *Erroneous Communion* is a *Sinner* before *God*, not as an *Hypocrite*, or a *Liar*, but as a Perſon who makes himſelf guilty of the Sins of *that Community* to which he joins himſelf; if it be *Idolatrous*, *Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical*, he and every *Member* of it, is an *Heretick*, *Sciſmatick*, or *Idolater*; and conſequently as Mr. *Chillingworth*, and our *Beſt Reformers* always taught, a *Sinner* before *God*, and not to be ſaved, but by the *Mercy* of *God*, and his own Repentance, as other Sinners are.

The Reaſon why the *Biſhop* is unwilling to allow the *Choice* of an *Erroneous Commuion* to be a *Sin*, is becauſe (p. 104) " Infallibility is not our Privilege, and therefore Almigh- " ty God puts our Title to his Favour, upon our preſent " Sincerity and Uprightneſs in this *Choice*. " I wiſh the *Biſhop* would give Almighty God leave to ſpeak for Himſelf, and not be impoſed upon, in the Imputation of Sin, by Rules of the *Biſhop's* making. Becauſe God has made our Natures fallible (or, Man made his own Nature fallible by his Fall) is a Man therefore excuſable, for joining himſelf to the moſt *Erroneous Communion?* Our Saviour's Rule was, *He that hath Ears to hear, let him hear*, i. e. Let every Man make what Uſe he can of the Powers God has given him, as he will anſwer the contrary at his utmoſt Peril. But are we obliged to believe *Nothing* that *God* ſays to us, or that his *Miniſters* declare to us, tho' never ſo true, becauſe we are *fallible Creatures*, and under a Poſſibility of being deceived? If want of *Infallibity* renders us excuſable for disbelieving *Any Part* of the *Chriſtian Religion* clearly Revealed, why ſhould it not excuſe from the *whole?* and why is not *he*, who, in the Integrity of his Heart,

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makes *Choice* of *Deiſm*, unaſſiſted by Divine Revelation, as the moſt pure and undefiled Religion, be in as ſafe a way to Heaven, as *he* who *believeth* and is *baptized?* for Both are *equally* fallible, and conſequently obliged to believe nothing under the Penalty due to Sin. Beſides if want of *Infallibility* renders us uncertain of our own *Sincerity*, eſpecially if *Sincerity* implies (as the *Biſhop* ſays) the *Uſe* of *All poſſible*, or *proper Means* of *Information*; for a Man may be more certain that it is his Duty to uſe *all proper Means* of *Information*, than he can be certain that himſelf has uſed *All* of them, as he ought to do, conſidering how apt we are to favour ourſelves in ſuch a Diſquiſition, (as *Solomon* obſerves Prov. 16. 2. *All the ways of a Man are right in his own Eyes: but the Lord pondereth the Hearts.*) And how many *proper Ways* of *Information* God has afforded to us. Which makes me wonder at what the *Biſhop* ſays (p. 107.) "I will never put my Salvation upon my being *certainly* "in the *Right*, till I am certain of my own *Infalliblity*." Which is as much as to ſay, that he never will believe the *Chriſtian Religion* to be *certainly true*, till he is ſure that he is *Infallible* in *All Things*. (for *Infallibility* extends it ſelf to *All Things*, but certainly to particular Propoſitions.) And therefore he adds, that he "can ſee no Comfort for "the moſt ſincere and moſt deſerving *Chriſtians* in putting "their Title to God's Favour upon any thing, that is not "in their own Power, and which Almighty God has not "obliged Himſelf to grant them." But Mr. *Chillingworth* and other *Proteſtant Divines*, could ſee a great deal of Comfort to many well meaning Chriſtians, by inſtructing them, that the Infinite Mercy of God was extenſible to Sins of Ignorance, according to the different means of Knowledge given to different Perſons, (where much is given, much is required) and different Degrees of Vertues, and Aſſent to the fundamentals of Chriſtianity, which may balance the leſſer Sins of Ignorance, and make, as it were, ſome Attonement for them. But They never taught Men were juſtified by their very Sins, or that God made our Natures ſo fallible, that they could be certain of nothing but their own *Sincerity*, or that it was poſſible for Men to join themſelves to the *moſt ſinful Communions*, without ſome *vitious Affection* of their own Mind, which brought too thick a Cloud upon their Underſtandings, to be pierced by thoſe radiant Beams of Light, which God hath given to both Natural and Revealed Religion.

But to do the *Biſhop's* Cauſe all the Juſtice that lies in my Power, I will acknowledge that a Man may be *morally certain*, that he has choſen a particular *Communion*, and adheres ſimly to his *Choice*, upon no other Motive than a Deſire of promoting the Glory of God, and the Salvation of his own Soul, as the neceſſary conſequent of it, and that whilſt he is under this *Perſuaſion*, his Conſcience will not accuſe or moleſt him. But then he muſt acknowledge, that if he has made a *wrong Choice*, *God* (as St. *John* ſays) *is greater than his Conſcience, and knows all things*; and, by the Neceſſity of his Nature, can approve of nothing, but what is true, tho' he may ſometimes pardon *Errors*; and as all this amounts to no more than a *good Intention*, it cannot *juſtify* that *ſinful Act* which is the Conſequent of it. My Senſe of this I cannot expreſs better than in the Words of *Biſhop Sanderſon* (Serm. 12. Ad Anlam. Sect. 10.) " Neither *pious Intentions* alone, nor reaſons of *expediency* alone, " nor yet both together, will either *warrant* us beforehand " to the *choice*, nor *excuſe* us afterwards for *the uſe* of *unlawful means*. " Now if *God* has *appointed* a *Belief* of *Truth*, as the *lawful means* of Salvation, the *Belief* of *Falſhood*, which is, as it were, eſſential to *erroneous Communions*, muſt needs be *unlawful*, and conſequently not to be *juſtified* by the *Piety* of a *good Intention*. The Reaſon of this is, becauſe the *Intention* does not *alter*, nor *affect* the *Action*, which is the *Conſequent* of it, which has an *intrinſick Goodneſs*, or *malignity*, antecedent to, and unalterable by the *Piety* of the *Intention*, which is plain enough from an Inſtance, which Biſhop *Hoadly* produces to prove the contrary. " In all *debates* in *Parliament*, (ſays he p. 105, 106.) I know of no" thing which can juſtify any one concerned in them but " the giving his Vote, or making his Choice, according to " his Perſuaſion —— (But ſays he) his *Perſuaſion* does not " affect the Nature of Things. The ſame Difference (*before* and *after Perſuaſion*) remains between the *two Sides* of " any Queſtion, and the ſame Excellency of *one* above the " other."

I Anſwer, I preſume the Sum of moſt *Debates* in *Parliament* is, whether ſuch or ſuch a *Law* is conducive to the *publick good* of the *Community*, or no, and the Houſe often divides upon that Point. But tho' the *oppoſite Parties* have the ſame *good Intention*, or *firm Perſuaſion*, which, according to the *Biſhop's Doctrine*, would equally *juſtify* both, yet ſtill the *Law* propoſed may have an *intrinſick Goodneſs* or *Malignity* in it, whereby it may have a tendency to promote the *publick*

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Good of a *Nation*, or utterly to deſtroy it; and it is not the *Perſuaſion*, or the *Sincerity* of the *Law-makers*, which can prevent the Miſchief a *bad Law* may do to the *Publick*, or augment the Conveniency of a *Good one*. Tho' the *voting* according to the *Dictates* of a Man's *Conſcience* will excuſe a Man to himſelf, for giving an *imprudent Vote*, and the Law of the Conſtitution has provided no Puniſhment for ſuch a *Voter*, yet it will not *juſtify* them before *God*, for making *Laws* detrimental to *true Religion*, or deſtructive to the *publick good* of a *Nation*. Neither will the firm *Perſuaſion* or *good Intention* ſo *juſtify* a *bad Voter* to his *Electors*, as to make *them* willing to chooſe *him* again, into the ſame Poſt of Truſt and Power. And tho' it is a *good Rule* for every Man to follow *his own Perſuaſion*, as the *Biſhop* ſays, yet it is a *fooliſh Rule* of *Action*, for any Man to perſuade himſelf, that his *good Intention* in making a *bad Law*, or *voting* for it, will at all *leſſen*, or *juſtify* all the Damage which a *Church*, or *Nation*, or *himſelf*, may receive from it.

P 108. The Biſhop is angry at the *Committee* for affirming, That his Doctrine of *Sincerity* has a Tendency to put an End to ALL Church-Authority to OBLIGE any to external Communion; and of ALL Power, that one Man, in what Station ſoever, can have OVER another, in Matters of Religion. And yet he ſays "he OWNS theſe *Conſequences*; "and likes the *Premiſſes* for the ſake of them—— and is "pleaſed that this gives him an occaſion of ſhewing clearly "what he deſigned to oppoſe.

Now if the *Biſhop* likes theſe *Conſequences*, I can ſee no reaſon, why, in any Part of his Vindication, he ſhould be offended with having *Anarchical Principles* laid to his Charge, unleſs it be that *Anarchy* is a Word of a *Greek Original*, and the *Biſhop*'s *Doctrines* are entirely *Engliſh*, having had their Birth within *His Majeſty's Dominions*, and I hope not likely to travel very far beyond them.

I have no *Commiſſion* from the *Committee* to State the Difference between *them* and the *Biſhop*, but, as a Miniſter of *Chriſt*, I have Authority from *him*, to ſtate, as well as I can, the Differences between the *Truth* that is in Things, and the *Biſhop*'s Doctrine of *Sincerity*, which I find thus ſtated p. 109. "The *Queſtion* is not (ſays he) Unchurching (ſee "p. 108.) Unchriſtianing or declaring out of God's Favour "open Offenders againſt the *Moral Laws* of *Chriſt*; but con-"cerns the Caſe of Chriſtians chooſing one particular ex-"ternal Church-Communion, or withdrawing from another,

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" even will the utmoſt Sincerity of Haert. " But the plain Truth is, the *Queſtion* is, whether the *Sentence* paſs'd upon the *Immoral Inceſt* of the *Corinthian*, did at all affect *him*, as to the Favour of God, which the *Biſhop* abſolutely denies, and thereby reduces *all Excommunications*, and *Church Cenſures* to *nullities* and *Trifles*. Beſides the *Queſtion* is, whether there can be any ſuch thing as an *Immoral*, or *Sinful Communion*, which (to ſpeak the Language of the *Committee*,) may be *unchriſtianed*, *unchurched*, or declared out of *God's Favour*, by any other *Communion*, or no. The Biſhop virtually declares there can be no ſuch thing, becauſe the *Sincerity* of every private Man's *Choice* juſtifies the Choice, even of the *worſt Communion*; and if every private Man is juſtified, I deſy any Man to hurt the *Community*, which is but an *Ens Rationis*, and leſs capable of being wounded than the fleeting Air. But the plain Truth is, if Scripture and Reaſon do not deceive us, there may be *particular Communions* ſo very *ſinful*, that it is the Duty of every Chriſtian to leave them, let their private Opinions be what they pleaſe. Such a Communion is that *Spiritual Babel* (whether Quakeriſm, or Popery) of which St. *John* thus ſpeaks, Rev. 18. 4, 5. *I heard a voice from Heaven, ſaying, Come out of her my People, that ye be not partakers of her Sins, and that ye receive not of her Plagues. For her Sins have reached unto Heaven, and God hath remembred her Iniquities.* I think three things are plain from theſe Words. Firſt, that there may be ſuch a thing as a *particular ſinful Church. (i. e.* a Society whoſe Rulers ſhall preſcribe ſinful Terms of Communion.) Secondly, that *every individual Member* of ſuch a *Communion*, is a *Sinner* againſt *God*. Thirdly, that the *Choice* of, and *Adherence* to, ſuch a *Communion*, are ſuch *ſinful Actions*, as cannot juſtify themſelves, without condemning God of Injuſtice, in puniſhing thoſe, who in their *utmoſt Sincerity* made *Choice* of ſuch a *Communion*. On the other hand, there may be, nay always has been ſuch a *Communion*, (for Chriſt builded his Church on a Rock) which, teaching none but true Doctrines, has *Authority* to unchurch, unchriſtian, and Declare to be out of the favour of God, all *Idolatrous*, *Heretical*, and *Schiſmatical Communions*. For when *two different Communions* contend together, the *Authority* always is on *her ſide* which maintains and defends the *Truth*, tho' in *Numbers* and *Secular Powers* much inferior to the *other*.

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This conſideration moved the great *Juel* to declare, in his Diſcourſe with *Harding*, that there was *Authority* enough in our *little Church* of *England*, to excommunicate the *great Church* of *Rome*, with all her Train of *Popes* and *Cardinals*, and bind them in ſpiritual Chains and Fetters. But if *Truth* is not on our ſide, the *Papal Excommunications* would have the ſame Effect upon us.

The *Biſhop (ib.)* complains, that " a great diſpleaſure is " expreſs'd againſt him, for not making the *Anger* of *God* de- " pendent upon *Excommunications.* " And ſo indeed there ought to be, when *Excommunications* are iſſued out againſt *immoral Offenders*, or *Deniers*, or *Gainſayers* of the *neceſſary Truths* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, It is not the *Act* of *Excommunication* that throws the *Excommunicated Perſon* out of the *Favour* of *God*, (for no Man can be made a Sinner by another Man's Act) but his *preceeding Sin*, and *ſubſequent Behaviour* under *that Sentence.* And therefore, tho' the *preceeding Sin*, (as the *Biſhop* urges in the Caſe of the inceſtuous *Corinthian)* whether the *Offender* is *excommunicated*, or no, would throw him out of the favour of *God*, as a Tranſgreſſion of the Law, yet it would not deprive him of the benefit of the *publick Prayers* of the *Church*, and the comfortable participation of the *Bleſſed Sacrament*, till the *Sentence* is paſs'd upon him for the *Scandal* it has given to the *Church* of *God.* Nor is the *Biſhop's* Diſtinction of *groſs Immoralities*, and chooſing *one particular external Church Communion* before *another*, to be at all regarded in this caſe. For the leaving a *Church* of an *Orthodox Faith*, to be joined to an *Heretical Communion*, is an *Immoral Action* in itſelf, and the Parent of many others. And the remaining under *that Sentence*, without Repentance, when juſtly inflicted, is a Sin againſt *God*, as it is a contempt of *Lawful Authority*, and a Refuſal of making Satisfaction to the *Church*, which is injured by it. As far as I can underſtand, his *Lordſhip's* meaning is this, *viz.* that there is no *groſs Immorality* in chooſing an *erroneous Communion*, or leaving one that is *Orthodox*, and therefore a *Sentence* of *Excommunication* paſs'd upon *Falſe Teachers*, and their *Diſciples*, ſo as to unchriſtian, unchurch, or caſt them out of *God's Favour*, can have no ſuch Effect upon them But I would ask this great Maſter of Demonſtration, whether there is not as much *Immorality* in *Idolatry*, and *Polytheiſm*, as in *Theft* and *Murder*? and whether there is any great Difference between the teaching Men the worſhiping *falſe God's*, (and a Capital Crime by the Law of *Moſes)* and teaching them ſuch *falſe Doctrines*, as

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have a tendency to make the worſhip of the *true God*, a Protection to all manner of Wickedneſs whatſoever? I will grant the *Biſhop*, that no *Excommunication* inflicted for the *groſſeſt Crimes*, or the moſt *flagrant Hereſies*, or *Schiſms*, does determine the *eternal State* of the *Excommunicated Perſon*; (much leſs of any whole Society.) for it was uſed by the *Apoſtles*, as a neceſſary part of that *Diſcipline*, which *Chriſt* left in his *Church*, not for the *Deſtruction*, but *Salvation* of the *Souls* of *Men*, and is revocable by *thoſe* who inflict it, upon the *Repentance* and *Submiſſion* of the *offending Perſon*. But I cannot ſay with the *Biſhop*, that it does not *at all affect them as to favour of God* (*p.* 112.) or, that the *Anger* of *God* is no ways dependent upon it. (*p.* 109) For the puniſhment attending upon it in the *Apoſtles* time, (no leſs than a Commiſſion to Satan to torment the Body of the Excommunicated Perſon) is a manifeſt token of *God's Diſpleaſure*, either for their *Crime* preceeding the *Sentence* or *ſtubborn Behaviour* under it. But if the *Biſhop* will contend, (as he plainly does in the Caſe of the Inceſtuous *Corinthian*) that this *Poſſeſſion* of the *Devil*, was a *Favour* of *God* to him, I will only as a *Chriſtian* wiſh his *Lordſhip*, and his *Friends*, the Happineſs of never falling under the *ſame Sentence*, that they may never ſtand in need of ſo *extraordinary a Favour*. But I wiſh they would conſider, that it is no Rational Conſequence, that *Excommunication* does not affect Men, as to the *Favour* of *God*, becauſe it does not totally determine their *future State*. For every Sin we commit does affect us as to the *Favour* of *God*, and bring often *temporal Puniſhments* upon us from him, tho' it does not immediately damn us to all Eternity, for then *no fleſh living could be ſaved*. And if *they* would conſider the *true Original* of *Excommunication*, as *they* ought to do, and the *proper uſe* of it, as delivered in the *Scriptures*, and practiced in the *Primitive Church*, they will find but little Reaſon for the *Biſhop's* hot Expreſſions againſt it in Page 112.

" I am (ſaith he) very ready to declare, that all *humane* " *Declarations* pretending, with Authority, to alter Men's " Conditions in the Eyes of God, are *mere humane Engines* " without any ſuch Effect; and that *Excommunications*, de- " claring and determining Men's Condition with reſpect " to Salvation, by *humane Authority*, are mere *outcries of* " *humane Terror*; *Terrors of Men* only, and *vain Words* againſt " thoſe who are the Objects of them: Though I fear not " *vain*, in their Effect upon *thoſe*, who preſume to throw " theſe Terrors, in the Name of God, all around them. "

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In which Paſſage I am forc'd to obſerve theſe following Defects.

1*ſt*. The *Biſhop* would have his Reader believe, that all *Authoritative Excommunications* are *mere humane Engines*, that is, *Inventions* of *Men*; whereas they owe their Original to no Man, but the Man *Chriſt Jeſus*, and to the *Apoſtles* governed by his *Spirit*, and to the Original Inſtitution of all *humane Societies* whatſoever, and to the Practice of the *Church* in all Ages, and all Parts of the World, as well as our own.

2*d*. He takes away all manner of Effect from *Sentences* juſtly pronounced, as well as from *thoſe* which are juſtly inflicted, for *neither*, according to him, do alter Men's Condition in the Eyes of God. So that the *Blaſpheming Heretick* under the *Sentence* of *Excommunication*, is as much in the *Favour* of *God*, as if no ſuch *Sentence* was paſs'd upon him. Whereas the *Apoſtle* St. *Paul* excommunicated the Hereticks *Philetas* and *Hymeneus*, that *they might learn no longer to Blaſpheme*, which would have been a ridiculous Attempt, if Men had been inſtructed in thoſe Days, that ſuch a *Sentence* did not at all alter their *(ſpiritual)* Condition in the Eyes of God.

3*d*. He makes that *Criminal* in a *Ruler* of the *Church* which is his *Indiſpenſible Duty* to do, *viz*. The declaring and determining Men's Condition with Reſpect to Salvation. For are not the *Rulers* of the *Church*, *(*if the *Bangorian Church* will admit of any Rulers*)* to determine by their *Authority*, what Sins will caſt Men out of *God's Favour*, and what will not? Are they not to pronounce *Hereſy* and *Blaſphemy* to be Sins of a damnable Nature, and Breaches of that Baptiſmal Covenant, by which we were received into the *Church*, and for Breach of which we ought to be turned out of it again? Did the *four general Councils* exceed the Bounds of their Duty, when *they* pronounced *Anathemas* againſt *particular Opinions* of Men, if *thoſe particular Opinions*, were really *Heretical* and *Blaſphemous*? Were *thoſe Anathemas mere outcries of humane Terror*, and *vain Words?* If it is the *Duty* of *every Miniſter* of the *Goſpel*, to declare, and determine from the *Goſpel*, what *Blaſphemies* and *Errors* are deſtructive of Men's Salvation; is it not the *Duty* of *all* the *Rulers* of the *Church* to do the ſame, when met together, in a *general*, or *provincial Council*, and to pronounce *Anathemas*, againſt *thoſe* who teach or receive ſuch pernicious Doctrines? And are *thoſe Anathemas vain Words*, and *Terrors of Men* only, (as the *Biſhop* ſays) which are pronounced againſt *thoſe*, who actually corrupt and deſtroy the *moſt fundamental Truths* of *God's eternal Goſpel?* Or,

are they pernicious only to *thoſe*, who, (as the *Biſhop* ſays) *throw thoſe Terrors about them*, when it is their *Duty* to do it, as *Miniſters of the Goſpel, and Stewards of the Myſteries of God*, to whom the Defenſe, and Preſervation of the Truth is by *Chriſt* committed?

4*th*. Theſe Words deſtroy all the *Authority* of the *Church*, as a Society inſtituted by the Son of God, and endewed with any Privileges by him. "I am ready, (ſays the *Biſhop*) to "declare that all *humane Declarations*, pretending, with "Authority, to alter," and I anſwer, that the *Church*, as a *Society*, would have ſufficient Authority to exclude unworthy Members from the Privileges which are proper to all other Societies, or voluntary Combinations of equals amongſt themſelves. Whence it is eaſy to infer, that the *Church*, as a *Society*, might exclude, as well as admit, any Perſons, unleſs her *Power* was herein reſtrained, or limited by an *Authority ſuperior* to her own. But as the *Church* is not a *Society*, made by a *Combination* of *equals* amongſt themſelves, but is rather a *Community* of *Men* ſummoned to pay Obedience to the Son of the living God, and to believe in him, under the Penalty of eternal Damnation, it muſt derive its *Authority*, both of *Admiſſion*, and *Excluſion*, from its *original Founder*, who is *Chriſt* the *Lord*, or from the *Apoſtles* who were inſpired by him. If ſhe was a *Society* which had no *ſpiritual Privileges*, the *Excluſion* from her would be no *Puniſhment*, becauſe there would be no Loſs, or Damage to the *excluded Perſon* by it; and then indeed *Excommunication* would be a *mere outcry of humane Terror*, a Form of *vain Words*, a *Nullity*, and *Trifle*, or whatever elſe the *Biſhop* would pretend to call it. But if ſhe has any *Spiritual Privileges* given her by *Chriſt* her Head, then the *Admiſſion* into her *Society* is a *Grace*, and *Favour*, and the *excluſion* from it is a *Loſs*, and *Puniſhment*, and muſt neceſſarily alter the Condition of Men in the Eyes of God, and affect his *Favour* to them, although it does not determine their future State; becauſe the *Sentence* is revocable by Repentance, and becauſe the laſt Appeal is to the Tribunal of God, who will rectify the Miſtakes of Inferior Courts, and permit none but the Guilty to ſuffer eternally by them.

The *Biſhop* and his *Friends* will not, I hope, deny, that *Chriſt* gave to St. *Peter* and the *Apoſtles*, the *Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven*, Mat. 16. 19. By which, I grant, is meant the Power of *Admiſſion* of fit Perſons, into the *Privileges* of the *Chriſtian Church*, and Exerciſe of the *Miniſterial Offices* therein. For the *Church*, on Earth may be called the *King-*

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dom of Heaven, by the ſame Figure of Speech, as an *entry* may be called a *Palace*, or a *Porch* may be called an *Houſe*. But as he who is admitted into an *Entry*, may be excluded from the *Palace*, and he who ſtands knocking in the *Porch*, may be for ever ſhut out of the Houſe; ſo he who is admitted by *Baptiſm*, into this *figurative Kingdom* of *Heaven*, called the *Church*, may be for ever excluded from the *real*, and *proper Kingdom* of *Heaven*, which then commences, *when Chriſt ſhall come in his glory, and all his holy Angels with him, and ſhall ſet on the throne of his glory*, Mat. 25. 31. *Chriſt* never gave away the *Keys* of this *proper*, and *peculiar Kingdom*, the *Subjects* whereof are exempted from *humane Authority*; but the *Subjects* of the *other* muſt live under Obedience to *every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's ſake*, and *give unto Cæſar the things that are Cæſar's*, as well as *unto God the things that are God's*. And no greater Affront can be put upon *humane Underſtanding*, than to pretend to give that Exemption from all *humane Authority* to *Chriſt's Subjects* upon *Earth*, which is the ſole property of *thoſe* who reign with *Chriſt* in the *higheſt Heavens*. And yet this is the Strength of the *Biſhop's* Argument to prove *Excommunications* to be "*mere Terrors of Men*, and *vain Words*, "pretending, with Authority, to alter Men's Condition in "the Eyes of God." As if all *Authority* exerciſed by Men, was *mere humane Authority*, which has no Foundation in *Divine Revelation*, but they either falſly pretend to it, or openly reject it, as *Atheiſts* and *Deiſts* do. The *Biſhop* does not deny that *Chriſt* gave this *excluding Power* to the *Apoſtles*; or, that the *Apoſtles* did exerciſe it in the *Church*; or, that the *Biſhops* in all Ages did not follow the Examples of the *Apoſtles* therein; or, that All *Societies* of *Chriſtians* do not uſe it as rigorouſly (when aſſiſted by the ſecular Powers) as the *Eſtabliſhed Church*. But he builds upon this rotten Foundation, that *all Authority* exerciſed by Men is *humane Authority*, and an *Engine* of *Men*; whereas *Men*, who receive a *Commiſſion* from *God*, do act by *his Authority*, and he that rejects *Men*, does reject *Chriſt* himſelf. The *Biſhop* does not ſeem to me to conſider that the *Apoſtles* themſelves, and *Evangeliſts* who penn'd the *Goſpel*, were but *Men* by Nature, *fallible* as ourſelves, tho' by *ſupernatural Grace* rendred *Infallible* in Things belonging to God. And therefore if *all Authority*, in delivering the *Rule* of Faith, exerciſed by *Men*, and *all humane Declarations* pretending to it, are *mere Humane Engines*, and *vain Words*, then we have no *Divine Rule*

of *Faith*, and consequently, we are under no Obligation to believe any one Article of the Christian Religion.

From what we have said, an easy Answer may be given to six Propositions which (p. 109. 110.) he acknowledges do contain his real Sentiments concerning the Doctrines of *Sincerity*, and the *Superiority* of *Conscience* to the *Dictates* of *Men*, if not of *God* himself.

1. He says, "The Authority here aimed at, (*i. e.* endeavoured to be by him destroyed) is the *Authority* of Judging, "Censuring, and Punishing the Servants of another Master, "conducting themselves, in their Choice, by their own "Consciences, with the utmost Sincerity." To which I Answer,

First, That the *Rulers* of a *Church* do not pretend to Judge of Men's *inward Sincerity*, but of the *Truth* of their Doctrines. A *Bishop* of the *Church* may as safely vote an *Anathema* against an *Heretical Doctrine*, as he may pronounce a Doctrine to be damnable, in a Sermon, or any other Discourse to his People. In the one he acts like a single *Bishop*, in the other as a Person acting in Consort with his Equals, obliged to declare the Truth in both Capacities, and so far as the *Determinations* are true, so far they do affect *all false Teachers*, whatever their *Sincerity* is, in guiding themselves by the Dictates of an erroneous Conscience.

Secondly, It is neither contrary to *Scripture*, nor to *Reason*, to punish the *Servants* of *another Master*, when *those Servants* do any injury to *Church* or *State*. *False Teachers*, and their *Adherents* do more Injury to the *Church* of *God* in some Respects, than the *greatest Libertines*, and therefore may be restrained by *those*, to whom the Care of the publick Good of the *Church* is by God committed, which consists in the Preservation of *ancient Truth*, and not in the Propagation of *modern Errors*. *Another Man's Servant* is unjustly punished by a *Stranger*, for Offences which only concern his *proper Master*, but not so for Offences against *others*, and especially against the *publick Good*. For then *every Christian*, as a *Servant* of *Christ*, would be unjustly punished for *Treason* against the *State*, or any *Injustice* towards his *fellow Servants*, which I am sure is more than his *Lordship* will allow. Neither does the *Scripture* the *Bishop* alludes to, (Rom. 4. 14. *Who art thou who judgest another Man's Servant?*) forbid the Censuring, or Punishing those, who injure the *Church* by *false Doctrines*. (*Censure* and *Punish* are not in the Text, but are altogether of *Episcopal Intrusion.*) But to *Judge*, i. e. to pass a final Judgment

ment upon the future State of a ſingle Perſon, which is proper only to him, who is the ſole Judge of the quick and dead. Nor is there any thing in that Text which makes for the *Biſhop's* purpoſe, as I ſhall ſhew in its proper place.

Thirdly, *Men's conducting themſelves, by their own Conſciences, with the utmoſt Sincerity*, makes no Recompence to their *fellow Chriſtians*, for the Damage they do their Souls, by leading them into damnable Errors, whatever Influence it may have upon themſelves, to render them pardonable by their great Creator. *Excommunication* was uſed by St. *Paul* againſt *Philetas* and *Hymeneus*, not only to bring back thoſe Offenders to a Belief of the Reſurrection, but alſo to prevent their ſpreading that Error over any Part of the Chriſtian Church, which would have rendred (as the Apoſtle tells the *Corinthians*, 1 Ep. Ch. 15. 14.) the preaching of the Apoſtle vain, and the Faith of their Hearers vain alſo.

Fourthly, The *Sincerity* of a *falſe Teacher* and his *Adherents* does no ways prevent the Damage, which the Society of the Faithful may receive, whilſt they live in Conjunction with one another; and therefore a *judicial Separation* of *falſe Teachers*, and their *Adherents*, from *thoſe* who remain in the *Profeſſion* of the *Truth*, is oft times neceſſary for the *Preſervation* of the whole *Chriſtian Religion*. In the firſt beginnings of the Goſpel, certain *Hereticks* mingled themſelves with the *Orthodox Chriſtians*, (though perhaps the *Biſhop's* Friends will not admit of ſuch a Diſtinction) who taught monſtrous Doctrines, concerning the *Divinity* of *Chriſt*, and the *Spirit*, and mingled the moſt filthy Abominations of Inceſt, Luſt, and Murder, with the moſt ſacred Rites of the Chriſtian Religion. The *Pagans* who heard all theſe called by the Name of *Chriſtians*, (becauſe they aſcribed a kind of *Created Divinity* to the *Bleſſed Jeſus*) accuſed the poor *Orthodox*, as Murderers of Infants, Drinkers of humane Blood, and Defilers of their Bodies by Inceſt, Adultery, promiſcuous Concubitures, and other Abominations not to be named by us. As this brought a bloody Perſecution againſt the *innocent Chriſtians*, ſo it might have brought a total Deſtruction upon the *Chriſtian Religion*, if thoſe *Wolves in Sheep's Cloathing*, had not been *judicially* thrown out of the *Communion* of the *Faithful*, notwithſtanding their Pretences to *govern themſelves*, by (as the Biſhop ſays) *their own Conſciences*, with the *utmoſt Sincerity*. The *Primitive Biſhops* were as unable as the *Moderns*, to ſee the *Hearts* of *Men*; and perhaps *Marcion* and *Apelles* were as *ſincere*, (*i. e.*) as firmly

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ly perſuaded of the *Truths* of their *Singularities*, as the *Biſhop* is of *his own*; yet that did not hinder *them* from throwing ſuch *falſe Teachers* out of the *Church*, nor ought that alone to hinder *Ours*.

Fifthly, what the *Biſhop* ſays of Men's *conducting themſelves by their Conſcience*, &c. muſt be underſtood of an *enlightned Conſcience*, the acting according to which, ought to exempt Men from the Penalties of *all Laws* both *Humane* and *Divine*; but to ſay the acting according to the Dictates of a *Conſcience* darkned by *Error*, diſtorted by *Prejudice*, exempts Men from *all Eccleſiaſtical Penalties*, is to ſay that which utterly deſtroys the very Notion of *Conſcience*. As will appear, if, as *Chymiſts* deal with *compounded Bodies*, we reſolve it into its conſtituent Principles.

1. *Conſcience* ſuppoſes the *Knowledge* of *God*. For if a Man knew no *Being* ſuperior to his own, he could have no Notion of any ſubjection to any thing, but the Dictates of his own Mind.

2. It ſuppoſes a *Knowledge*, or at leaſt a firm *Perſuaſion* of ſomething commanded, or forbidden to be done, by that *Being* ſuperior to his own. Hence, St. *Paul* allowes the *antient Pagans* to have had a *Conſcience*, that is a Knowledge of Moral Good and Evil, from the known Attributes of the Divine Nature, tho' they wanted the Benefit of ſupernatural Revelation.

3. *Conſcience* ſuppoſes a *Knowledge* of the Neceſſity, as well of Believing what God ſays, as of doing whatever he commands. No Man can doubt but that when God ſpeaks to Man, it is his Will that Man ſhould believe what he ſays to be true; and if it be the Will of God that *all Men ſhould come to the Knowledge of the Truth*, then thoſe are Sinners who oppoſe the *Truth*, which God has revealed whether they are conſcious to themſelves of that oppoſition, or no.

4. *Conſcience* ſuppoſes a *Knowledge* of our own *Conformity* to the *Will* of *God*, either in Matters of *Faith* or *Practice*, without which all Diſcourſe about *Conſcience* is vain. For if God had not given Men the Faculty of Ratiocination, whereby they are enabled to judge of particular Actions, by general Rules, or Maxims, they might have what we call *Scientia*, or *Knowledge* of Good and Evil, Truth and Falſhood; but not *Con-ſcientia*, a *Knowledge* within themſelves of their own *Conformity* to the general Rules of *Faith* and *Morals*.

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5. *Conſcience* implies a *Memory* of particular Acts, otherwiſe it could not acquit, nor condemn, for it is not the *Knowledge* of general Rules, but the *Memory* of particular Acts, or of Habits generated by them, which brings Joy or Grief to the Minds of Men. This cauſed the great *Chillingworth* to affirm, that Men conducting themſelves by their Conſciences might be Sinners againſt God, for oppoſing Truth, and divulging Error. Whereas the *Biſhop* always ſuppoſes *Conſcience* to be the *ſole Empreſs*, or Dictator of humane Actions, and equally juſtifies both *Truth* and Error, and that no one ought to be *cenſured* or *puniſhed* for acting according to the *Sentiments* of his own *Conſcience*.

Now if *Conſcience* is founded upon the *Knowledge* of a *God*, (for at preſent I have nothing to do with the Conſcience of an Atheiſt) it muſt be founded upon the *Knowledge* that *that God* is *ſuperior* to our own *Conſciences*, or as St. *John* expreſſes it, *God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all things*, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20, As therefore a Mind convinced of the *Exiſtence* of a *God*, muſt be convinced of the Neceſſity of *obeying* him in whatſoever he *Commands*, ſo it muſt be convinced of the Neceſſity of *believing* him of whatſoever he ſays is *true*, or it muſt be inconſiſtent with it ſelf, and unable to draw any legitimate Concluſion from the moſt obvious Principles of humane Reaſon. It is Blaſphemy to ſay that God has revealed *any thing* that is *falſe* in itſelf; or that whatever he has revealed, is not ſome way or other, conducive to his own Honour, and the Salvation of his Creature Man. To ſay the firſt, is to aſcribe *Falſhood* to *God*, to ſay the ſecond, is to aſcribe *Impertinence* to the *God* of *Wiſdom*. Neither of them can be conſiſtent with a *right uſe* of *Reaſon*, which teaches, as well the Neceſſity of *Subjection* of our *Underſtanding* to whatever he declares, as of our *Will* to whatever he *commands*. *Conſcience* therefore cannot be our *ſupreme Guide*, becauſe 'tis founded in the *Knowledge* of neceſſary and unavoidable *Subjection*.

The firſt *Operation* of the *Mind* of *Man* in *Conſcience*, is the *Collection* of ſuch *Practical Principles*, as are evident by *Natural* or *Supernatural Light*, in order to rule and govern our *Thoughts* and *Actions* by them. The *Pagans* were capable of making ſuch *practical Collections*, otherwiſe they could not have had ſuch Pretence to *Conſcience*, as the *Apoſtle* allows them, *Rom.* 2. 15. *Which ſhews the work of the Law written in their Hearts, their Conſcience alſo bearing Witneſs, and their Thoughts the mean while accuſing, or elſe excuſing one another.* But as the *Pagans* did not make theſe *practical Principles* from themſelves,

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or from the *rational Conceptions* they had of the *Nature*, and *Attributes*, and *Will* of *God*, this *Syntereſis* (as Divines call it) was not the Effect of the *Superiority* of *Conſcience* over their reſpective *Words* and *Actions*, but of its neceſſary *Subjection* to the *Commands* of a *ſuperior Being*. But as Dr. *Sanderſon* well obſerves in his firſt *Prælection* of *Conſcience*, (p. 22.) The Object of *Conſcience* in a *Chriſtian*, is of a larger extent, than the Object of *Conſcience* in a *Pagan*, becauſe *he* is obliged not only to the *Obſervation* of *moral Duties*, but alſo to the *Belief* of the *Myſteries* of the *Chriſtian Religion*. The *Diſbelief* of which is ſaid, *Tit.* 1. 15. to *defile*, or pollute *the Conſcience and the Minds of Men*; as their *Hearts* are ſaid, *Acts* 15. 9. to be *purified by* (a true) *Faith*. The *Conſcience* therefore of a *Chriſtian* can't be *pure*, unleſs the *Collection* of *practical Propoſitions* laid up in the *Mind*, be taken from the *right Conceptions of God*, as the *ſupreme Governor* and *Director* of *Faith* and *Practice*. But if his *Collection* of *Principles* is taken from the *falſe Conceptions* of an *Erroneous Conſcience*, his *Mind* is ſtill *impure*, tho' his *Belief* is Ἀνυπόκριτος (as the Apoſtle calls it, 1 *Tim.* 1. 5) *without Hypocriſy*; becauſe the *mixture* of *Falſhood* in *firſt Principles* corrupts the very *Fountain* of all *Chriſtian Faith*, which is then only *pure*, when it is agreeable to the *pure Word* of *God*, without the *mixture* of *humane Errors*. Now (ſays the Apoſtle 1 *Tim.* 1. 5.) *the end of the Commandment is Charity, out of a pure Heart, and of a good Conſcience, and of faith unfeigned*. *Conſcience*, as Dr. *Sanderſon* obſerves in the ſame place, will as well check us for *Apoſtatizing* from what we promiſe to *believe* in our Baptiſm, as for neglecting, or tranſgreſſing *thoſe Laws* of *God* which we promiſed then to *obey*; *Evangelical Faith* being to be reckoned, as that great *Divine* teaches, amongſt the *Operabilia Moralia* the *moral Duties* of a *Chriſtian* Joh. 6. 29. *This is the work of God, that you do believe on him whom God hath ſent*. There is only this material Difference, that *Conſcience* is apt immediately to check Men for *known Immoralities*, but not ſo for *Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical Errors*, till length of Time has diſcovered their *Contrariety* to the *Word* of *Truth*. But the *Biſhop* will not allow the *Deviations* from the *Truth* of *God's Word*, to be ſinful, and puniſhable either by *God* or *Man*, provided they be agreeable to that *Syſteme*, or *Collection* of *Principles* of *natural Light*, *divine Revelation*, or both mix'd together, which *Hereticks*, *Schiſmaticks*, or perhaps *downright Infidels* make for themſelves, as the beſt Rule of *Faith* and *Manners*. For all theſe may conduct themſelves by their *Conſciences* in this Senſe, as well as *thoſe* who adhere

to the *Truth* of *Divine Revelation*; and tho' the *Biſhop* gives them *all* the *tender Appellation* of *Men conducting themſelves by their Conſciences, with the utmoſt ſincerity*, yet they are called in *Scripture*, *Wolves in Sheeps cloathing*, i. e. *Falſe Teachers* pretending to great *Sincerity*, but really deſtroying the *Souls* of *Men* by their *venimous Doctrine*; and *Dogs*, —— *Beware of Dogs, beware of the Conciſion*, becauſe they greedily devoured the Maintenance of the *Faithful*, but promoted the Intereſt of *Jewiſh* and *Pagan Infidels*, and *Antichriſts*, becauſe they pretended to be for *Chriſt* but did not mean that *Chriſt who came in the fleſh, (he who denieth Chriſt is come in the fleſh is Antichriſt)* but a *Chriſt within them*, which is but another Name for *natural Conſcience* and *Deceivers*, Tit. 1, 10. 11. *there are many unruly and vaintalkers* and *deceivers, eſpecially they of the circumciſion: Whoſe Mouths muſt be ſtopped, who ſubvert whole Houſes, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy Lucres ſake, and falſe Prophets of the Beaſt*, and *with him* to be eternally *tormented in the Fire*, tho' perhaps they taught nothing contrary to the *Sentiments* of their *Minds*, but *thoſe Truths* which *God* revealed to the *Apoſtles* by his *Spirit*.

But all theſe *falſe Teachers* and their *Adherents*, in the *Biſhop's* Language are *Men conducting themſelves by their own Conſciences, with the utmoſt Sincerity*, having *an immediate Regard to Chriſt*, and thereby made Members of his Univerſal Inviſible Church, deſpiſing *vain Words*, and *terrors of Men*, and not to be cenſured, or puniſh'd, by any *Eccleſiaſtical Authority* becauſe they are *Servants* of *another Maſter*. *Chriſt* ſaith, *a good Man, out of the good Treaſure of his Heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil Man bringeth forth evil things*, i. e. *falſe Principles* received into the *Mind*, and laid up in *it*, as in a Treaſury, for the Conduct of humane Life, will produce *evil Actions*, and *true Principles* have the ſame aptitude in Nature, (if not obſtructed by baſe Affections) to produce *thoſe Acts* which are *eſſentially Good*. But according to *Biſhop*, Hoadly *falſe Principles*, and *true Principles*, are *Treaſures* of *equal value*, provided they are received with an *equal Degree* of *Aſſurance*, for if a Man *conducts* himſelf according to his *Conſcience*, tho' that *Conſcience* is a Repoſitory of *all the falſe Doctrines* that hath been taught from *Simon Magus*, to *Muggleton*, he is ſafe from *all Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures*; for no *Rulers* of a *Church* can ſee the *Heart*, but ought rather to judge charitably, *viz.* that *Simon Magus* was as *ſincere*, as his Antagoniſt St. *Peter*, and ſo far as he *believed in Chriſt*, ſo far was he ſecured from the *Cenſures* of *any* of *Chriſt's inferior*

Miniſters, as well as from the *Judgment* of the *laſt Day*. For every Man muſt *ſincerely believe*, what he does *ſincerely believe*, and therefore can't be damned, or cenſured for *Opinion*, unleſs he is ſo fooliſh as to attempt an impoſſible thing, *viz.* to *believe a Doctrine*, and not to *believe it* at the ſame time; or unleſs he is ſo ſuperlatively wicked, as to *believe one Doctrine*, and to *teach* and *profeſs another*.

And here we may obſerve a vulgar Error, which I wonder ſhould find a Place in the Writings of ſo great a Man, *viz.* that *Conſcience* is the *ſupreme Governor* of *all humane Actions*; whatſoever is done by *her Dictates* is *Good*, and whatſoever is done *againſt them* is *morally Evil*. Whereas in propriety of Speech, *Conſcience* can no more be ſaid to *command*, or *dictate*, than it can be ſaid to *fly*. All that the *Mind* of *Man* is capable of doing in the *Formation* of *Conſcience*, is to underſtand what *God commands*, or *forbids* to be done, or, to be *believed* by us, but it is *God* who obliges us to Performance. *Conſcience* implies no more than the *Knowledge*, of that *Obligation*; and ſince the *Obligation* is prior to the *Knowledge*, the Breach of the *Divine Command* (in matters of Faith and Practice) muſt be a *Sin*, whether the *Infidel*, or the *Libertine* believe it to be ſo, or no. And a *Mind* ſtored with a *large Collection* of *falſe* and *Heretical Principles*, can never be conſiſtent with a *good Conſcience*, tho' the *Will* and *Affections* ſhould make *no Oppoſition* to the *Underſtanding*, but act *all things* in *Conformity* to *it*. *For if the Eye be Evil, the whole Body will be full of Darkneſs.*

The ſecond *Operation* of the *Mind* in *Conſcience*, is, as Dr. *Sanderſon* ſays, the *application* of the *general Light* of the *Mind*, to the *particular Acts* of *Humane Life*, in which the *Mind* is not eaſily to be deceived, tho' even herein ſome have taken Pains to deceive themſelves. But this *Light* of the *Mind*, ariſing only from *that general Collection* of *practical Maxims*, which every Man, more or leſs, makes for himſelf, the *Conformity* of the *Act* to any *falſe Maxim*, received as *true*, cannot acquit the *Conſcience* of *Guilt*, tho' the *Conformity* of the *particular Act* to the *general Maxim*, ſhould be as perfect as 'tis poſſible for an humane Act to be. For the *Mind* having ſinned in the firſt *deviation* from *Truth*, in embracing a *falſe Maxim*, it is like, what the *Phyſitians* call, an *Error in the firſt Concoction*, not to be mended in the *ſecond*, or *third*, though Nature ſhould therein do her perfect Work. Now the *Light* of a *Chriſtian's Conſcience*, ariſing as well from the *Revelation* of *Goſpel Myſteries*, as from the *general Reaſon* of *Mankind*, an *Erroneous Belief* of *thoſe ſacred Myſteries*, muſt neceſſarily

neceſſarily produce an *Erroneous Practice*, if the Man be *true to his own Principles*. Thus, for Inſtance, if the *Mind* is ſatisfied that this *Principle* of revealed Religion is true, *God alone is to be worſhiped*, it can't be ſatisfied with the *Idolatrous worſhip* of *Idols*, without what we call, *remorſe of Conſcience*, which is nothing elſe but a *Senſe* of the *Contrariety* of her own *Acts*, to her own receiv'd *Principles*. The like may be ſaid of *thoſe* who *firmly*, (that is, in the *Biſhop's* Senſe, *ſincerely*) believe that *Chriſt is not really* and *properly God*, for upon *that* ſuppoſition, they can't pay *him* thoſe *Honours*, which *Reaſon* appropriates to the *ſupreme independant Being*. But if it be a *true Maxim* of *revealed Religion*, into which we are Baptized, that the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Spirit* are that *one God*, who is the *true Object* of *Religious Worſhip*, *God* can neither be diſpleaſed with the *Oblation* of that *reaſonable Service*, nor the *Conſciences* of thoſe be diſturbed who pay it upon that *Religious Principle*, for *both* will be ſatisfied in *their Conſciences*, whilſt they think their *Practice* is *conformable* to *their Principle*; (for every Article of Faith is a Principle in the Conſcience of a Chriſtian,) yet *one* of *theſe* muſt be *Fighters againſt God*, and conſequently *Sinners* againſt *him*, according to the Judgment of our firſt *Reformers*.

In this *Operation* of the *Mind*, the *Conſcience*, in a figurative Senſe, may be ſaid to act the part of a *Judge*, becauſe it paſſes *Sentence* of the *Conformity* of the *particular Act*, to the *general Rule*, and, as it were, *commends* us, where that *agreeableneſs* is found, and *condemns* us, whenever it appears to be wanting. But I would not have the *Biſhop* and his *Friends* thence conclude, that *Conſcience* is the *ſupreme Judge* of *humane Actions*, and that her *Sentence* is always *juſt*. For *agreeableneſs* to a *falſe Maxim* may be a *ſinful Error*, as the *agreeableneſs* of a *particular Act* to a *wicked Maxim*, may be, nay muſt be, a notorious *Breach* of *Duty*. The *Biſhop* does very well, in exhorting and encouraging Men, to *act according to their Conſciences*, in the *application* of *general Light* to *particular Acts*, wherein *Conſcience* ſeldom fails of doing *her Duty*. But I can't ſay he does well in admitting *falſe Light* into the *ſame Degree* of *ſovereign Power* with the *true*; as if a Man acting according to *falſe* and *erroneous Maxims*, was in as ſafe a Condition in reſpect to God and Man, as *he* who acted according to *thoſe* which are apparently *true*; or, as if the *Church* of *Chriſt* had no *Authority* from *Chriſt*, of judging *Hereticks*, and *Schiſmaticks* becauſe *Hereticks* and *Schiſmaticks* acted agreeably to *falſe* and *wicked Maxims*. Whereas 'tis the Du-

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ty of a Man, as well to furniſh his *Mind* with *true* and *good Principles*, as to act according to *thoſe Principles*, when they are received as *Rules* of *Action* by him. Which ſeems to me to be the true Senſe of that Place in *Solomon*, *My Son, keep thy Heart* (or Conſcience) *with all diligence, for out of it are the Iſſues of Life.*

The *Biſhop* therefore places the *ſole Rectitude* of *Conſcience*, in judging of the *Conformity* of *ſingle Acts*, to *general Rules*; which ought to be placed as well in the *formation* of *general Rules*, by *Reaſon*, and *Revelation*, as in the *Menſuration*, of *ſingle Acts* by *them*. And having thus erred in his *firſt Conceptions* of *Conſcience*, (like a Man who builds an Houſe, and forgets to lay Foundation) it is no wonder if he is miſtaken in the firſt of thoſe ſix Propoſitions, which he ſays (*p.* 109) "do clearly ſhew what he principally deſign'd to oppoſe, "*viz.* I. The *Authority* of Judging, Cenſuring, and Puniſhing Men conducting themſelves by their own Conſciences, with the utmoſt Sincerity." For if *Conſcience* is the *ſupreme Judge* of *all humane Actions*, ſhe is not to be controuled by any *other Authority* of *God* or *Man*. But I am amazed to hear a Man of his *Lordſhip's* bulky Learning, requeſting his Reader to compare *this Propoſition* with the *avowed Principles* of the *Reformation*. For *that* was founded upon ſuppoſition, that the *Church* of *Rome* had erred in *matters* of *Faith*, and *Affairs* of *Eternal Salvation*; that *thoſe Errors*, tho' *ſincerely* believed, were yet *ſinful* in the *Eyes* of *God*, and that therefore *ſeparation* was neceſſary for *them* who would not be *partakers of her Sins*. Tho' Mr. *Chillingworth*, and others of our greateſt *Champions* do allow a *poſſibility* of *Salvation* to *erring Proteſtants* and *Papiſts*, it is upon ſuppoſition of a *general*, or *particular Repentance*, both which imply a *preceeding Sin*. He ſays indeed (*p.* 19.) "that to ask Pardon for purely "involuntary Sins, is to impute ſtrange Tyranny to God," but then he ſays, (*ib.*) "that this Caſe of purely involuntary Errors is very rare, and that he is perſuaded, God "will not impute them as Sins to thoſe who uſe ſuch "a meaſure of Induſtry in finding Truth, as humane Prudence, and ordinary diſcretion ſhall direct to;" but if therein we fail, our Errors become malignant, and juſtly imputable, as Sins.

Biſhop *Juel*, when *Harding* urged againſt him, that *Proteſtants* had neither *full Synods*, nor *full Parliaments*, replied, "that, foraſmuch as concerneth God's everlaſting Truth, "Proteſtants depended not on Parliaments, or Synods, but "on God, (*i. e.* God's Word) Parliaments (ſaith he) are uncertain,

" certain, and often contrary, but God's Truth is one, and " never changes." Therefore to oppoſe *Truth*, either by *Parliamentary*, or *Synodical Authority*, or *Private Judgment*, in the Opinion of that learned Man, was always accounted a Sin. Neither Arch-Biſhop *Laud* in his Diſcourſe againſt *Fiſher*, nor Dr. *Morton* in his *Proteſtant Appeal*, nor any other *Apologiſt* for the *Reformation*, did ever excuſe the *Papiſts* from the *Guilt* of *Sin*, for *impoſing*, and *believing falſe Doctrines*, tho' they had no Reaſon to doubt of their *Sincerity*, as far as *Sincerity* ſignifies a *firm* and *entire Perſuaſion*.

But theſe were *private Men* in reſpect to a *National Synod*, which (Can. 10. I *Jacobi*) renders *all Schiſmaticks*, and *oppoſers* of the *Doctrine* and *Diſcipline* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, liable to *Excommunication*; as our *Acts* of *Parliament* have made them ſubject, as *Offenders*, to many *Penalties*, which now by *Parliamentary Authority* are taken away.

When therefore the *Biſhop* owns in his firſt Propoſition, that, " his principal Deſign was to overthrow all Authority " of puniſhing the Servants of another Maſter, for conduct- " ing themſelves, in the Choice of a Communion, by their " own Conſciences, with the utmoſt Sincerity." He owns *his Deſign* of overthrowing an *Authority* exerciſed by the *Synods*, and *Parliaments*, of this *Nation*, and yet is ſo unreaſonable, in the Beginning of his Book, as to requeſt his Reader, to compare *his Principles*, with the *Principles* of *our Reformation*; which can't be done for any other Purpoſe, than to ſhew the vaſt Difference between them, and the *Superiority* of ſo great a *Genius* to all *Synodical* and *Parliamentary Authority*, that is, or ever was, in the *Britiſh Church*, and *Nation*.

Conſcience, and *Sincerity* are very *venerable Names*, whilſt they are permitted to retain their *Original Signification*, but when we deprive them of *that*, and make them *Advocates*, and *Patroneſſes* of *falſe* and *impious Doctrines*, they looſe their *antient Honours*, and become ſo *ſcandalous*, that every *wiſe* and *honeſt Man* will be aſhamed to own them.

1. *Sincerity* is ſometimes uſed to denote a *firm* and *entire Perſuaſion*. In this Senſe, I will allow the greateſt *Hereticks* may be as *Sincere*, as the moſt *Orthodox Chriſtian*, and that an *Enthuſiaſt*, in the heighth of *Agitation* by an *evil Spirit*, like *Montanus*, *Hackett*, and *Naylor*, may ſo far miſtake *Poſſeſſion* for *Inſpiration*, as to dye a *Martyr* for a *Religion* of *his own*, or the *Devil's* making. But this *Sincerity* is ſo far from exempting Men from *Cenſure*, that it renders them

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the fitteſt Objects, both of *Divine* and *Humane Juſtice*. For the more *Sincere* they are in this Senſe, the greater *Enemies* they are to *God*, and the *Truths* revealed by him.

2. *Sincerity* ſometimes ſignifies that *Vertue* whereby Men are diſpoſed to obſerve an exact *Cougruity* between their *Thoughts*, their *Words* and *Actions*. In which Senſe it is oppoſed to *Hypocriſy*, which implies a *Diſagreement* of *Words* and *Actions*, with the *real Sentiments* of the *Mind*. In this Senſe I will allow that many of the *Proteſtant Diſſenters* may be as *Sincere*, as the moſt *zealous Sons* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*; and whilſt they think their own *reſpective Communions* to be the *Beſt* and *Pureſt* extant, (as all good Men ought to do) I can't blame them, for their Endeavours to overthrow, (by all lawful means) the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, as the greateſt *Bulwark* which ſtands in their way, to what they think a *farther Reformation*. This is that *Sincerity* which I would earneſtly recommend to the *Biſhop* and his *Friends*, that whilſt by remaining in our *Church*, they declare, according to the *Biſhop's* own Rule of *Sincerity*, that it is the *Beſt Choice* they could make, *i. e.* the *pureſt Communion* now extant, they would uſe all lawful Endeavours, rather to bring *Diſſenters* over, to the *Doctrine* and *Diſcipline* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, (which is ſo very practicable, that it is to me a Wonder, that it is not already done) than to reconcile the *Doctrine* and *Diſcipline* of the *Church*, to the various *Schemes* of *Government*, (if not *Doctrine*) which are to be found in *diſſenting Congregations*, a Thing impoſſible, and therefore not to be attempted by any. I would beg of of his *Lordſhip*, that, in compaſſion to the almoſt expiring Religion, he would not repreſent it as *equally propitious* to *Truth* and *Falſhood*, for that will give a good Pretence to the *ingenious Infidels* of the *Age* to move for its *utter Extirpation*. I could heartily wiſh, that, whilſt his *Lordſhip* is under the *Obligation* of an *Oath* of *Canonical Obedience* to his *Metropolitan*, he would not ſay any Thing that *but* ſeems to deſtroy *all humane Authority* over the *Conſciences* of *Men*; for if his *Metropolitan* has no *Authority* over the *Conſcience* of the *Biſhop*, I am ſure the *Biſhop* can be under no *Obligation* to pay *any Obedience* to his *Metropolitan*, and then the *Oath* is ſuch a *Compliment*, as is not very conſiſtent with the *Sincerity* of a *Chriſtian Biſhop*. It would likewiſe be very prudent in the *Clergy* to addreſs his *Lordſhip*, that whilſt he enjoys *any Part* of the *Eccleſiaſtical Revenue*, he would give no *Hints* of the great Alterations ſuch *Revenues* have made to the *Damage* of *Chriſt's Spiritual Kingdom*; for the vulgar may think ſuch a *Conduct* incon-

inconſiſtent with *Chriſtian Sincerity*, tho' Men of his *Lordſhip's* exalted Genius may be able to ſolve more difficult Riddles.

But tho' I allow *Sincerity*, in this Senſe, to be honourable in all Men, yet I can't ſee any Reaſon why it ſhould exempt its *Owners* from *Subjection* to *all humane Authority* in *Church* or *State*. *Authority* was given to *Rulers* by *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles*, to prevent that *Faith which was once delivered to the Saints* free from *Error*; and where they ſee *Truth* invaded, either by *Hypocrites*, or *Men* of *Sincerity*, they muſt defend it againſt *either* of them, with ſuch *ſpiritual Weapons*, as *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* have left them. For *Rulers* can't judge of *Sincerity*, becauſe they know not the *Heart*; but they can judge of *Truth*, becauſe *God* hath given for *that* a *certain Rule*, and with a ſafe Conſcience puniſh the moſt *ſincere Oppoſers* of it. And as the chief Buſineſs of the *Rulers* of a *Church* is to preſerve the *Truth* delivered to them free from *notorious Errors*, (otherwiſe they would be the Miniſters of the Kingdom of Darkneſs, and not the Miniſters of the Kingdom of Light) and the *Congruity* of Men's *Words* and *Actions* to their *inward Sentiments* is impoſſible to be known to Men unaſſiſted by *ſupernatural Powers*; the *Correction* of *Errors*, by all ſuch Methods, as *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* uſed upon Earth, muſt needs be their proper Work. This is acknowledged by *Preſbyterian*, *Independent*, and *Anabaptiſtical Congregations*, who will not give the *Communion* to *thoſe* who maintain *Opinions* contrary to that *Scheme* of *Orthodoxy*, which they have made for themſelves, or collected from the holy Scriptures. They are wiſe enough to conſider, that without the exerciſe of ſuch *Eccleſiaſtical Authority*, the *Sincerity* of the *Independent Congregations* would overthrow the *Sincerity* of the *Presbyterian Miniſters*, tho' aſſiſted by their *Ruling Elders*; and the *Sincerity* of the *Presbyterian Government* would be always endeavouring to overthrow the *Diſcipline* of the *Congregational Seperatiſts*; and *Anabaptiſts*, and *Quakers* be as dangerous to *Both*, as their *Sincerity* renders *them* to others. Nay the very *Quakers* (who ſeem of all others to approach neareſt to that Equality of Chriſtians among themſelves, in which the *Biſhop* of *Bangor*, and the *Author* of the *Rights* ſeem to place the Right, and Felicity of the Chriſtian Church) have yet their *Yearly*, and *Monthly Aſſemblies*, wherein they preſcribe a *Dreſs* to the *outward Man*, (prohibiting whatever *Garments* they think *Vain* and *Modiſh*) with a *Face* of as much *Authority*, as if they were a *General Council* of *Taylors* met together in *Mercer's Hall*, to determine *Affairs* of *Conſcience*, and *Matters* of *Eternal Salvation*.

3. The

3. The Word *Sincere* does not always in common Use, *Cui penes Arbitrium eſt, & jus & Norma loquendi* —— ſignify that *vertue* diſtinct from *all others*, which I laſt deſcribed but rather a *mode* of *all other Chriſtian vertues*, ſignifying their *Freedom* from any *Mixture* of the oppoſite *Vices*. In which Senſe it is uſed Adverbially, as denoting the *Mode* of a *Mode*, to ſpeak the Language of our modern *Metaphyſitians*. Thus a Man is ſaid to be *ſincerely Pious*, when his *Piety* is without any *mixture* of *Scepticiſme*; to be *ſincerely Juſt*, when his *Juſtice* is without *Mixture* of *Fraud*, or *Deceit*; and to be *ſincerely Charitable*, when his *Charity* is without *Mixture* of *Covetouſneſs*, or *Grudging*, *for God loveth a chearful giver*. In this ſenſe, *Sincerity* in the *Choice* of a *Communion* that is *Idolatrous*, or *Erroneous* in it ſelf, cannot in Reaſon be exempted from *Divine*, or *Humane Authority*, becauſe it is not ſufficient to make a *ſincere Choice* of a *Communion*, unleſs we behave ourſelves *Sincerely* in it, let it be *good*, or *bad*. I have already granted, that the *Choice* of an *erroneous Communion*, made for the ſake of the *Honour* of *God*, and the *Salvation* of our *Souls*, without Reſpect to any *Worldly Advantage*, is a *ſincere Choice*, and equivalent to a *good Intention*. But I never can grant, that a *good Intention* will *juſtify* an *evil Action*, as the *Choice* of an *erroneous Communion* muſt be in the Opinion of *thoſe* who make any Diſtinction between *Truth* and *Falſhood*. But I will now add, that the *ſincere Choice* even of a *Good* and *Orthodox Communion*, will not exempt a Man from the *Wrath* of *God*, or *Puniſhment* by *Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures*, unleſs he behaves himſelf *ſincerely* in it. For a Man who *chooſes* a *Communion*, is ſuppoſed to believe *entirely* the *Doctrines* of that *Communion*, otherwiſe he can't behave himſelf *ſincerely* in it. He who *chooſes* the *Popiſh Communion* for the Good of his Soul, is ſuppoſed to believe *Intirely* the *Doctrine* of *Tranſubſtantiation*; and he who joins himſelf to an *Independant Congregation*, is preſumed *ſincerely* to believe, the *Body* of the *People* to be the *Fountain*, or *Seat* of *all Eccleſiaſtical Power*. And therefore *all Societies* of *Chriſtians* (*Friends* not excepted) will cut off all thoſe *Members* from the *Body*, which do not conſent with the *Head*, in the *entire Belief* of *ſuch Doctrines*, as are the *diſtinguiſhing Marks* of *all divided Communions*. Whereas the *Biſhop* takes away *all Authority* of Men's puniſhing, or cenſuring *thoſe* who have made a *ſincere Choice*, tho' after that *ſincere Choice*, they behave themſelves never ſo *inſincerely* in the *Communion* they have choſen. According to him the *Sincerity* of the *Choice*

juſti-

juſtifies the Man before *God*; and he owns that "his *Deſign* is "to throw down *all Authority* of Cenſuring the Servants of "another Maſter —— conducting themſelves, in their "Choice, with the utmoſt Sincerity." Now ſuppoſing this a *good Deſign*, it only juſtifies the *firſt Choice* of a *Communion*, but not the *ſubſequent Inſincerity*, which the *Heads* of *all Communions* do juſtly puniſh with a deſerved *Excluſion*. No Man can *ſincerely* hold *Communion* with a *Church*, that challenges *any Authority* to it ſelf, if he is *ſincerely* perſuaded that no *Church* can have *any Authority* over the *Servants* of *another Maſter*; and if *Inſincerity* is puniſhable, either by God, or Man, he may be cenſured, and juſtly puniſhed, by the *Head* of his own *Communion*, however he is exempted from the *Juriſdiction* of *others*. For he can't join himſelf to *any Communion*, without his tacit acknowledgment of ſome *Authority* in *it*; and if afterwards he acts any thing openly, or covertly againſt *it*, he is juſtly puniſhed for *Inſincerity*, which I hope neither the *Biſhop* nor any of his *Friends* will be able to deny.

4. As for what the *Biſhop* ſays that *Sincerity* of *Choice* implies the *utmoſt Diligence*, in uſing *all proper means* for *Information*, preceeding or concomiting an *erroneous Choice*, I find nothing like it, either in *Greek* Words, in the new Teſtament, which our Trnſlators have rendred *Sincerity*, or in the common uſe of the Word, or in the Nature of the Thing. *Phil.* 1. 16. it is called ἁγνότης, *Chaſtity*, or *Purity*. *Ch.* 2. 15. ἀκεραιότης *harmleſs*, or *unmixt Purity*, 1 Pet. 2. 2. ἄδολον γάλα, *undeceitful*, *ſincere Milk of the Word*. 1 Cor. 5. 8. εἰλικρινεια 2 Cor. 8. 8. τὸ γνήσιον *Generoſity*. Eph. 6. 24. ἀφθαρσία *Incorruption*. Tit. 2. 7. ἀδιαφθορία. None of which Appellations carry *Diligence* in their original Signification. It is true every Man ought to be *diligent* in his *Choice* of a particular *Communion*, becauſe it is a Matter of great Conſequence, ſince Chriſtians are ſo unhappily divided, to chooſe that *Society* whoſe *Doctrines* we can heartily approve, whoſe *Cauſe* we can ſafely eſpouſe, with whoſe *Form*, or *Manner* of *Worſhip* we can moſt heartily join, whoſe *Prayers* we think moſt effectual, and whoſe *Diſcipline* is moſt agreeable to the *Pattern* that *Chriſt* has left us, and the *Apoſtles* and *primitive Biſhops* have practiced in antient Times. But if *firm Perſuaſion* is all that is eſſential to *Sincerity* without any great relation to *preceeding Diligence*, I will be ſo charitable as to believe, that many are *ſincerely perſuaded* of the *Divine Right* of the *Presbytery*, who have not uſed their *utmoſt Diligence* to obſerve what *Blondel*, or *Walo* have ſaid for, and *Hammond*, and

Cave, and the preſent Learned *Biſhop* of *Oxford*, and others have ſaid againſt it; and that many are *ſincerely perſuaded* that our *Liturgy* is *ſuperſtitious*, if not *Idolatrous*, who never were ſo *diligent* as to give it one attentive Reading. And as for *utmoſt Diligence* in the *ſearch* of *Truth*, it is never to be attained to in this preſent Life, becauſe by the neceſſity of our Natures, we can but *know in part*, and *ſee in part*, and therefore an *End* of a *Chriſtian's Labour* in *ſearch* of *Truth*, is as abſurd, as to imagine an *End* of an *Infinite Line*. It is with Chriſtians as with the Country Man,

——*redit Labor actus in Orbem.*

And if his *Lordſhip* will allow none to be *ſincere*, but *Thoſe* who have uſed their *utmoſt Diligence* in the *Choice* of a *Communion*, no Man living can ever be exempted, upon account of his *Sincerity*, from any *Penalty* whatſoever, foraſmuch as no Man is ſo *diligent* in the *Inveſtigation* of *Truth* to Day, but that he may be more diligent to Morrow.

Sincerity and *Conſcience* are very formidable Names when uſed in their proper, and ſcriptural Signification, *viz.* for an *entire Aſſent* to *Truth*, and *exact Obedience* to the *Law* of *God* declared by an *enlightened Conſcience*, but when they are uſed only to frighten *Spiritual* and *Temporal Rulers* from doing their Duty, in the Suppreſſion of *Blaſphemy* and *Error*, they are but *vain Words*, and *mere Terrors of Men*. It puts me in mind of *Salmoneous* in *Ovid*.

Demens, qui Jovis Ignem, & non imitabile Fulmen,
Ære, & Cornipedum Curſu ſimularat Equorum.
Mad was the Man who ſtrove with ratling Wheels,
And prauncing Hooſes, o're vaulted Arch of Stone,
To imitate the angry Voice of Heaven,
And ſpeak like Jove to Man in vocal Thunder.

Having conſidered the firſt Propoſition tending to *Anarchy* which the *Biſhop* owns (p. 109.) I proceed to his ſecond, wherein he acknowledges his Deſign to oppoſe "all *Autho-*" *rity* of *Unchriſtianing*, and declaring out of God's Favour, "ſo as to have Effect."

I know this is the *Biſhop's* deſign from ſeveral Paſſages in his Book and Sermon, but whether it is a good Deſign or no, is the Thing I am to enquire. Our Saviour ſays, *Matt.* 18. 15, 16, 17. *If thy Brother ſhall treſpaſs againſt thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.*—— *But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two Witneſſes.*—— *And if he ſhall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen Man and a publican.*

Now

Now can we think that *Chriſt* would command his *Diſciples* to uſe a Man as an *Heathen*, or a *Publican*, when the Man was as much in the *Favour* of *Chriſt*, after an *Eccleſiaſtical Cenſure* as before it? (which is the plain Aſſertion of the *Biſhop* in the Caſe of the *Inceſtuous Corinthian*) would he authoriſe a *private Man* to ſhun and avoid his Company, whilſt *himſelf* hug'd him in his Boſome? Would he ſend his *Diſciples* to the *Church* for a redreſs, if the *Cenſure* of the *Church* had no manner of Effect? How could it be a means of bringing the *offending Perſon* to Repentance? And if it was only a *Licenſe* for one *private Man* to avoid the Company of *another*, (as the *Biſhop* ſeems to think it) what need was there of appealing to the *Church*, to obtain a *Licenſe* for doing *that*, which every Man has a Right to do, by the Law of Nature, and of Nations, *viz.* to chooſe his own Friends and his own Company? What Advantage was it for the *Chriſtian* to have leave, to ſhun the Company, or Converſation of an *offending Brother*, when the *offending Brother* was equally diſpoſed to deſpiſe the Friendſhip of the *offended Chriſtian*? Did the *Apoſtle* St. *Paul* think theſe Words of Chriſt of *no Effect*, when he was angry with the *Corinthians*, for not *mourning* over an *Inceſtuous Brother*? And were not St. *Paul* and the *Apoſtles* as proper Judges of the Senſe of theſe Words of *Chriſt*, as the *Biſhop* of *Bangor*, and his *Adherents*? Does the *Biſhop* ſay ſuch *Authoritative Sentences* have *no Effect*, becauſe the Effect is not *immediately viſible*? And is not the Argument as ſtrong againſt all other *Apoſtolical Inſtitutions*, and even the Sacraments of *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper*, which have as little claim to *immediate viſible Effects*, as *Excommunication*? Did Chriſt ever deny the Privilege of excluding unworthy Members to his *Church*, which is common to *all Societies*? And is the *Church* a *Society* ſo void of *Spiritual Privileges*, that the loſs of them is to be eſteemed as nothing, or as a Matter of no Effect, nor Conſequence? I grant the *Biſhop*, that the *Sentence* of *Excommunication*, is no *Sentence* of *Eternal Condemnation*, becauſe it was even in this Place enjoyned, as a means of Emendation, as appears from its Paralel, *Luk.* 17. 3. But I deny that the *declaring* any Perſon, or Perſons out of *God's Favour* has *no Effect*, becauſe it does not damn a Man to all Eternity. For God may, for a Time, withdraw the *inward Aſſiſtance* and *Comfort* of his *Grace*, and may inflict *temporal Puniſhments*, as in the *Apoſtles* Time, on the *ſecluded Member*, and yet reſerve the final Determination of his future State to the Day of Judgment, wherein he will proportion Rewards and Puniſhments, according to the *Truth* that

is in *Things*, and not according to the *Opinions* of Men, or the *Doctrines* of a *ſingle Biſhop*, in direct Oppoſition to the Sentiments of the *Catholick Church* in all Ages, as well as of our own. Every *Miniſter* of *Chriſt* is bound to declare to his People, (and upon occaſion to the whole Chriſtian World) what *ſinful Actions*, or *erroneous Doctrines* will throw Men out of God's Favour, in every publick Sermon, and in all private Converſation. But when he is called to a *Synod*, or to a *General Council*, he muſt declare the ſame Thing, in *Conciliary*, or *Synodical Language*, which is uſually done by annexing *Anathemas* to ſuch Opinions, as by the general Conſent of the *Council*, or *Synod*, are determined to be falſe and erroneous. When a private Miniſter declares nothing but *Truth* to his Congregation, every individual Member capable of Judging, throws himſelf out of the Favour of God, if he does not believe him; But *Synodical* or *Conciliary Declarations*, or *Publications* have a greater Force, (as is manifeſt, *Acts*, 15.) and muſt have a greater *Effect* upon thoſe who deſpiſe the *Truth* after ſo ſolemn a Publication. But according to the *Biſhop* of *Bangor's* Poſition, it has no *ill effect* at all upon *any*, but *thoſe* who make theſe *Deciſions* in *Matters* of *Faith*, or put them in execution by inflicting the *Cenſures* of the *Church*, or threaten them as Sentences that at all affect Men as to the *Favour* of *God*.

He ſays (p. 109.) his third Deſign was to oppoſe "Any "*Church-Authority* to OBLIGE others to one particular "Church Communion."

In Anſwer to which I ſay, that the moſt plain meaning of this ſeems to be, That no Man is obliged to be any more of *one Communion* than *another*, or rather that he is not obliged to be of *any*. For only *particular Communions* can oblige, (for generals, as I obſerved before, act nothing) and if there be not any one *particular Church* that can oblige a Man to be of her *Communion*, then a Man can lay under no *Obligation* at all to be of *any Communion*, notwithſtanding our Saviour's Command to *all* his *Diſciples*, that they all ſhould receive the Holy Sacrament in Remembrance of him. It is ſtrange that a *Biſhop* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, ſhould declare to the World, that no Man is obliged to be of that *Communion*, which by the *Biſhop's* own Choice, according to his own *Doctrine* of *Sincerity*, is ſuppoſed to be eſteemed by his *Lordſhip*, the beſt and pureſt in the World; or that it is a Matter of no Moment what particular *Communion* a Man chooſeth, provided he chooſes but *any*. And yet this is that Interpretation which any ordinary Reader would make of this Propoſition; nor indeed is it eaſy to make any other.

But if we examine this Propoſition by that which follows, or by many other Paragraphs in his Book, we ſhall find that the *Biſhop's* deſign is not to deny a Man's Obligation to *any particular Communion* by the *Dictates* of his *Conſcience*, but by the *Authority* of the *Rulers* of the *Church*; ſo that *Conſcience* may determine the *Choice* of a *particular Communion*, tho' *Church Authority* can never do it. But if the *Biſhop* and his *Friends* would hearken to *ſound Doctrine*, it is neither the *Authority* of the *Church*, nor the *Authority* of a *private Conſcience*, but it is *Truth* that juſtifies the *Choice* of any *particular Communion*, and makes *one Communion* more eligible than *another*. Neither, accurately ſpeaking, is it *Truth*, or *Conſcience*, or *Church Authority* which obliges us to the *Choice* of a *particular Communion*, but it is *God* alone who obliges the *Conſciences* of Men to aſſent to his *Divine Truths* wherever they find them, and who alone can puniſh *falſe Teachers* and their *Adherents* for erecting *Heretical*, or *Schiſmatical Communions* in oppoſition to the *Truth*. It is a common Form of Speaking to ſay, *Truth obliges to ſpeak this, my Conſcience obliges me to do this Action, Charity engages me to do good to ſuch or ſuch a Perſon*; The true meaning of all which Phraſes is not, that *Truth* and *Charity*, which are no Perſons themſelves, do lay perſonal Obligations upon the Sons of Men, but that *God* hath made *Truth* ſo neceſſary to our Natures, that he will abhor every individual Perſon of thoſe Communities of Men which make and believe a Lie, and that he will reward the *Charitable* and puniſh the *uncharitable Perſon*, and that he will puniſh thoſe who do Things materially evil againſt the Knowledge, and Conviction of their Minds. But tho' this Power of obliging the *Conſcience* is originally in *God*, and totally flowing from Him, yet is it communicable to *Men* and *Angels*. The *Jews* (as the Apoſtle teacheth) received the *Old Law* from the *Miniſtration* of *Angels*, yet was it as obliging, as if it had come to them immediately from *God himſelf*, and been wrote with his own Finger, (as one Part of it was) in Tables of Stone. The *Apoſtles* received the *Goſpel* from *Chriſt*, yet Obedience to this *Goſpel*, (both in Matters of *Faith* and *Practice*) is as neceſſary to thoſe who heard them preach, as if *Chriſt* himſelf had preach'd to them. The *Rulers* and *Spiritual Guides* of our *Church* received the *Truth* of their *Doctrines* from the Writings of the *Apoſtles*, and whilſt they teach nothing but *ſuch Truths*, as they have received from *them*, they may ſay there is *Authority* enough in their *Church* to oblige others to *external Communion*.

But

But the *Biſhop's* real Deſign is to overthrow all *delegated Authority* both in *Men* and *Angels*, and to give *Conſcience* a Dominion over all the *Truths* delivered by them. As will appear from his fourth Propoſition. *(ib.)* wherein he declares himſelf an Enemy to the " *Power* claimed by ſome Men, in " ſome particular Stations, (as ſuppoſe in the exerciſe of the " Epiſcopal Office) OVER others, in matters of Religion, in " the Senſe of determining for them, their Choice of, and " their Adherence to, a particular Church Communion. "

Here I muſt acquaint the Reader Firſt, with the true ſignificancy of a great O, when the Word *Over* is uſed in Controverſial Divinity, when that Word is written with a little o, it retains its old imperious ſignification; but when it is wrote with a great O, and in Capital Letters, (which the Reader may often find in the Biſhop's Book and Sermon) then it is a Note of intire and unlimited Subjection. Thus, for example, whenever the *Biſhop* ſays, when no *Chriſtian* has *Power* OVER the *Conſcience* of *another* (in determining his *Choice* of a Communion) his meaning is that *Conſcience* has an intire *Power* over the *Church* to determine the *Choice* of a particular Communion, tho' that *Communion* ſhould be *erroneous*, in oppoſition to her *Authority*. So that he extends the *Power* of a *private Conſcience*, not only over *Church Authority*, but over *Truth* itſelf, againſt which neither *publick*, nor private *Authority* of Men ought ever to prevail.

Secondly, I obſerve that the *Biſhop's* Phraſes, of " determining the Choice of a particular Communion, the " making a Communion for others, " *&c.* muſt either ſignify ſomething that is impoſſible, or ſomething injurious to Truth, or ſomething very impertinent and nothing at all to the Purpoſe.

It is firſt impoſſible that any *Church* ſhould *determine* any Man's *Choice* of a *Communion*, becauſe every Man whether he will or no, muſt *determine* for himſelf. All that a *Church* can do, is either to propoſe ſuch *credible Motives* of *Aſſent* to the *underſtanding*, as may convince it of the *abſolute neceſſity* of ſubmitting to the *Truth*, or, (eſpecially when aſſiſted by ſecular Powers) ſuch *ſecular Rewards* and *Puniſhments* to the *Will*, as may byaſs the *underſtandings* in her enquiry after *Truth*. But ſtill it is the Man himſelf, in *Popiſh* as well as in *Proteſtant Countries*, who *determines* his own *Choice* of, or *Adherence* to a *particular Communion*, and conſequently is reſponſible to *God*, if he embrace *Error*, when *God* has made a ſufficient *Revelation* of the *Truth*, or ſuffers himſelf to be byaſs'd by *Temporal Rewards*, and *Puniſhments*, in ſo great an Affair of *Conſcience*, and matter of *Eternal Salvation*

2. If thereby the *Biſhop* means, that every Man's Determination of himſelf, by his *Conſcience*, will juſtify him before *God*, nothing can be ſpoken more injurious to the *Truth*, and to the diſparagement of all *Divine Revelation*. There are two things to be conſider'd, and diſtinguiſh'd in *Divine Revelation*. The *Authority* of the *Speaker*, and the *utility* or *Goodneſs* of the thing *ſpoken*, or *revealed* to us. The *Authority* of *God* the *Speaker* is the ſame in all things, whether ſmall or great, and equally oblige us to believe, that *Abraham begot Iſaac*, as that *Jeſus is the Son of the living God*, who *died for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification*. But if the *utility* of the *Subject* is conſidered, it infinitely more concerns us to believe, that *Jeſus is the Son of the living God*, that he *died for our Sins, and roſe again for our Juſtification*, than that Iſaac *was Abraham's Son*. But if every Man's *Determination* of his *Choice* by his own *Conſcience* does juſtify him before God and Man, a Man may as ſafely chooſe a *Communion* that denies *Chriſt's Divinity*, as that affirms it; that believes the *Reſurrection*, as that deſpiſes and contemns it; (if any ſuch was extant,) and all the Dignity of *Divine Revelation* be ſacrificed to the abuſe of that very Faculty of diſcerning *Truth* from *Falſhood*, God has given to Man for the Preſervation of it whole and entire.

Neither can I, thirdly, but ſtand amazed, to hear a *Chriſtian Biſhop* talk of making many *different Communions*, as of a thing indifferent, when *Chriſt* left his *Church* under *one Communion*, diſtinguiſhed into *many* by nothing elſe but *Local Juriſdiction*; but theſe *oppoſite Communions* now in the *Church* are the *Work* of the *Devil*, which the *Conſcience* of every good Chriſtian is oblig'd to deſtroy, and not to foment and Cheriſh. For not to charge any *particular Sect* now amongſt us with *Hereſy*, or *Schiſm*, it is certain we ſhould be all of *one Mind*, and under *one Diſcipline*, (as we have but *one Lord, one Faith, one Baptiſm*) if Satan did not blind the Eyes of ſome Men, and raiſe the unruly Paſſions of others, to break and diſturb the *Peace* and *unity* of the *Catholick Church*, which the *Apoſtles* left whole and entire to ſucceeding Ages.

We read in the Holy *Scriptures* of three Ways, or Means by which the *Apoſtles* endeavoured to preſerve the *unity* of the *Chriſtian Church*, all which are entirely overthrown by the *Biſhop*. The firſt was by the Preſervation of *one Faith* (*Eph.* 4. 5.) This the *Biſhop* overthrows by allowing *Conſcience* to juſtify Men in *Communions* of different and repugnant *Faiths*. The ſecond was by appoining *Rulers*, and *Governors* of the *Church* in things conducive to Edification, but not predetermined

mined by any *Law* of *Chriſt*. This the *Biſhop* deſtroys by denying *any Man* to have *Power* over the *Conſcience* of *another*, without which, *all Government* is ſoon reſolved into *Anarchy* and *Confuſion*. The third was the caſting *Hereticks* out of the *Church*, and *marking thoſe which cauſed Diviſions*, (Rom. 16. 17.) and *avoiding their Converſation*. This laſt the *Biſhop* endeavours to overthrow in his 5th Propoſition, *viz.* " A Power of *Excommunication* which is claimed, upon which " the Anger of God is to follow, and the State of the Perſon " ſo *Excommunicated*, to be affected by it in the other World. "

Here the *Biſhop* poſitively declares that no *Anger* of *God* attends upon *Excommunication*, tho' inflicted for the moſt *flagrant Hereſies*, or the groſſeſt *Immoralities*. But he gives no Reaſons for this Declaration, his *own Authority* he thinks, more than a *Balance* for the *Judgment* of the whole *Catholick Church*, in all Ages of the World. If the Rule of —— *Quod ubiq; quod ſemper, quod ab omnibus* (laid down by *Vincentius Lyrinenſis*) viz. That which has been believed in all Places, at all Times, and by all Men, ought to be received as an *Apoſtolical Tradition*, and part of the *Catholick Faith*, it may be as good an *Authority* for *Excommunication*, as for the *Baptizing* of *Infants*, the Obſervation of the *firſt Day* in the *Week*, the aboliſhing of the *Jewiſh Sabbath*, and other *Opinions* and *Practices* of the *Church* from the Birth of *Chriſtianity* to this very Day.

The judicious Mr. *Hooker* (to whom the *Biſhop* is more beholden for his Scheme of Civil Government, than to the Holy Scriptures) in his Firſt Book of *Eccleſiaſticol Polity* does allow, that a *general Conſent of Mankind* is a good Proof of the *Truth* of any Propoſition, becauſe where we find a *general Conſent*, we may conclude that there is a *general Cauſe* of a *general Effect*. And hence it is, that the *univerſal Conſent* of *all Men* (Monſters only excepted) that *there is a God*, is urged as an Argument, that *there is a God*; tho' other Reaſons are not wanting, to prove the *Exiſtence* of a *firſt independent Cauſe* of all Things. And ſhall not the *univerſal Conſent*, and *Practice* grounded on it, of the *Biſhops* and *Clergy* of the *Ati-Nicene* and *Poſt-Nicene Fathers*, and of *all Chriſtian Churches* ſince their time, be as good an Argument, that *Excommunication* juſtly inflicted, does draw after it the *Anger* and *Diſpleaſure* of *God*, as the *ipſe dixit* of *one ſingle Biſhop* is of the contrary Opinion? or, does the *Biſhop* think that his deſtroying *all* the *Authority* of his *Brethren* in *Matters* of *Faith*, is not as viſible a Piece of Humane Policy, as that of the *Grand Seignior's* in Murdering *all his Brethren*, that he may Rule, and Govern alone.

If

If the *Biſhop* diſclaims this *univerſal Authority* over the *underſtandings* of *all Men*, and appeals to the Reaſons given (*p.* 36) why the *Spiritual Puniſhments* inflicted by the *Church* can have *no Effect in the other World*; I muſt examine his Reaſons, as one ſtanding upon equal Ground with other reaſonable Creatures. He ſays, (*p.* 36.) "If they have *any* "*Effect in the other World*, then the Condition of *Chriſtians*, "with reſpect to the Favour of God, is determined by the "*Sentence* of the *Church* paſſed upon them." —— But his *Lordſhip* is very much miſtaken, if he thinks that *Excommunication* is a *Determination* of a Man's *State* in *another World*; for it is an *Inſtrument* of *Diſcipline*, ordained by *Chriſt* and *his Apoſtles*, not for the *final Deſtruction* of the *Souls* of *Men*, but their *Repentance* and *Amendment*, the Conſequence of which is *Life Everlaſting*. If it was a *final Determination*, there would be no room for *Reſtoration*, for which the *Church* always makes Proviſion, and her Senſe of it I cannot better expreſs than in her own Words in the *Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitutions*, 1597. *Quia Excommunicationis uſus in Eccleſia, perpetuæ legis vigorem jam obtinet*, &c. *Becauſe the uſe of Excommunication in the Church, has always been eſteemed to have the Force and Strength of a perpetual Law, and is to this Day in uſe in the Exerciſe of all Eccleſiaſtical Juriſdiction, and therefore cannot be changed, or altered, without the Change, (as well as great Damage) of the Juriſdictions, and other Laws of this Kingdom. Nevertheleſs that Excommunication (which is to be eſteemed the very Nerve and Bond of Eccleſiaſtical Authority and Diſcipline) may be reduced to its antient Uſe, Honour, and Dignity*, &c.

I preſume the *Biſhop*, in the Sincerity of his good Will to *Conſtitutions* of *his own Church*, does declare, nay pretends to demoſtrate, that "*Excommunication* makes not a Tittle "of Alteration, in the Eyes of God, with reſpect to the "Spiritual Condition of a Chriſtian." And if it makes any, in the Eyes of Men, that is not to be regarded by a Chriſtian, who (as he often teaches) muſt have in *immediate Regard* to *Chriſt*, and not fear the *Judgment* of *Men*.

Thus the *Biſhop*, in pure *Sincerity* to the *Diſcipline* of the *Church*, cuts in ſunder the very *Nerve* and Bond of *all Eccleſiaſtical Diſcipline*, yet continues in *her Communion*, and aſſumes a *Name* implying *Power*, *Order*, and *Juriſdiction*, (i. e. the Exerciſe of Diſcipline) in it. This is like the *Sincerity* of *Delilah* to *Samſon*, who firſt got Information of the Bond which tied his great Strength unto him, and then cut it aſunder, or, like the *Sincerity* of a *Bully*, who firſt breaks off the Point of a Man's Sword, and then provokes him to

draw. Or the *Sincerity* of a *Jockey*, who cuts aſunder the Nerves of a Horſe's Leggs, and then enters him to run for the Plate.

But granting the *Biſhop* that the *Authority* of *his own Church* is inferior to that of the *Demonſtration* which he pretends to make us ſenſible of in the following Words, *viz.* " A *Sentence* " or *Puniſhment* of Men, which makes not a Tittle of Alte- " ration, in the Eyes of God, with reſpect to the Spiritual " Condition of a *Chriſtian*, cannot be ſaid to have *any Effect* " *in the other World*. But the Spiritual Puniſhments, in- " flicted by the *Church*, are of that Sort. Therefore they can have no Effect in the other World. " His *Lordſhip* intimates that we are beholden to his *Modeſty*, that he did not call this a *ſtrict Demonſtration*, and his *Lordſhip* will be beholden to our *Ignorance*, if ever we think it is ſo. For tho' nothing is more certain than that *Puniſhments* which make no *Tittle* of *Alteration* in the *Favour* of *God*, can have *no Effect* upon us in the *other World*, yet it is not true that whatſoever has *no Effect upon us*, ſo as *to damn us* to *all Eternity*, does not make *one Tittle* of *Alteration*, in the Eyes of God, with reſpect to the *Spiritual Condition* of a *Chriſtian*, as his *Lordſhip* ſuppoſes. For thoſe *Sins* (or Puniſhments of Sins) which do not abſolutely determine our *future State*, may yet ſo affect the *Spiritual Condition* of a *Chriſtian*, as to throw him out of the *Favour* of *God*, till he riſes again by Repentance. And certainly *that* makes ſome *Alteration*, in the *Spiritual State*, or *Condition* of a *Chriſtian*: Otherwiſe St. *Peter* wept bitterly, and to no purpoſe, when he denied his Lord and Maſter. For *God* had made no *abſolute Decree*, that he ſhould be *damned* to all Eternity for that heinous Sin, yet it *altered* his *Spiritual Condition*, in the Eyes of God, and brought him into the like neceſſity of *Mourning*, with Perſons juſtly *Excommunicated* by the *Church*; and that I am ſure is more than *one Tittle* (as the *Biſhop* elegantly calls it) of *Alteration* in the Eyes of God.

If the *Biſhop's* towring Genius would have at all condeſcended to *Boys-Play*, in making *Syllogiſms*, I preſume his Argument might have been better expreſſed in the following Form. *viz.*

Whatſoever does not certainly damn a Man to all Eternity, makes not one Tittle of Alteration, in the Eyes of God, with reſpect to the Spiritual Condition of a Chriſtian.

But the Sentence of the Church does not certainly damn a Man to all Eternity.

Ergo,

Ergo, It makes not one Tittle of Alteration, in the Eyes of God, with reſpect to the Spiritual Condition of a Chriſtian.

For the *Biſhop's* Deſign being to prove that no *Anger* of *God*, did follow the *Sentence* of *Excommunication*, or that it made not *one Tittle* of *Alteration*, it could not be any other Way demonſtrated, but by affirming that whatſoever does not certainly *damn us to all Eternity*, makes no *Alteration* in us, as to the *Favour* of *God*. A falſe and abſurd Propoſition.

But let us examine his Syllogiſm in his own Words. And firſt I obſerve a Fallacy in the firſt Line of his *Major Propoſition*, wherein he would have us preſume that *Excommunication* is a *Sentence* or *Puniſhment* of *Men*, that is, (as he expreſſes it in another Place) a *Terror* and *mere Outcry* of *Men*, a *mere humane Engine*, and *Form of vain Words*, dangerous to the *Excommunicating*, rather than to the *Excommunicated Perſon*. Thence he begins his Demonſtration, with calling it a *Sentence*, or *Puniſhment* of *Men*. But what if this *Sentence* or *Puniſhment*, is not an *Invention* of *mere Men*, but an *Ordinance* of *Chriſt*, or an *Apoſtolical Inſtitution*, as I have already ſhewed it to be, ſhall it follow that a *Sentence* pronounced by *Men*, by virtue of an *Ordinance* of *Chriſt*, or *Apoſtolical Inſtitution*, is a *Form of vain Words*, that makes not a *Tittle of Alteration* in the Eyes of God? This can't be ſaid, without confining the Power of *Excommunication* to the *Perſons* of the *Apoſtles*, or affirming that an *Apoſtolical Inſtitution* has no manner of Effect upon the *Spiritual Condition* of a *Chriſtian* in this World, or in the other; and that the Liberty *Chriſt* gave his *Diſciples*, of uſing an obſtinate Offender, as an *Heathen*, or a *Publican*, and the Power he gave them of *binding upon Earth*, and promiſing it ſhould be *bound in Heaven*, had not the leaſt Tittle of ſignification in it.

He thinks he proves his *Minor*, by ſaying, that, " ſuppoſing the *Sentences* of *Excommunication* wrongfully inflicted, the *Chriſtian* is ſtill in the *Favour* of *God*. " (*p.* 37.) But what if his Innocence does ſtill preſerve him in the Favour of God, if the *Sentence* is inflicted by a *lawful Authority*, it will have *that Effect* upon him, and ſo *alter* his Condition, in the Eyes of God, that if the *Excommunicated Perſon* does not ſeek *all lawful means* to clear his Innocence, and reconcile himſelf to the *lawful Governors* of his *Church*, when they by falſe Witneſſes have been induced to paſs an unjuſt Sentence upon him, he does Sin againſt *God*, who has commanded us by his *Apoſtle*, (Heb. 13. 17.) to *ſubmit our*

ſelves

ſelves to thoſe who have the rule over us, he may juſtly be damned for it. And if this makes not *one Tittle* of *Alteration* in the Eyes of God, of a Chriſtian's *Spiritual Condition*, I do not know what can do it. The *Biſhop* ſays, he incurrs this Puniſhment by his *Behaviour* under this Sentence, and not by the *Sentence itſelf*, but then it is the *Sentence itſelf*, which makes that *Alteration* of his *Spiritual Condition* in the Eyes of God, which obliges him to an humble and ſubmiſſive Behaviour, and that overthrows the Truth of his *Lordſhip's Minor Propoſition*.

But tho' it were true that *unjuſt Sentences* paſſed upon Men for *Profeſſion* of the *Truth* can have no ill *Effect* upon *them*, yet it does not follow therefore that the *Sentence itſelf* has no *Effect* upon *thoſe* who are *Excommunicated* for preaching *falſe Doctrines*; for it is an *Aggravation* of their Sin to perſevere in their ſpreading falſe Doctrines, when they are under ſo ſevere a Sentence for ſo doing. And if *aggravating Circumſtances* make no *Alteration* of a Man's *Spiritual Condition* in the Eyes of God, God can't be ſaid to judge World in *Righteouſneſs*, or *Juſtice*, which has always reſpect to *aggravating Circumſtances*, as well as to the matter and ſubſtance of every Action.

The *Biſhop* is not contented to excuſe *Heretical* and *Schiſmatical Teachers*, and their *Adherents*, from any ill Effects of *Excommunication*, but even the *greateſt* of *immoral Offenders*. He ſays plainly (*p.* 27.) that, " the *Excommunication* of the " *Inceſtuous Corinthian*, neither added to God's Diſpleaſure; " nor would the want of it have at all diminiſh'd it. Nei- " ther if he had died in an impenitent Condition, would " *that Sentence* have had any Effect in the other World."

I wonder his *Lordſhip* does not think it more conſiſtent with his Honour, utterly to renounce the *Chriſtian Religion*, than thus rudely to treat *Chriſt*, and his *Apoſtles* who were the firſt Founders of it. It is a greater Affront to a Man to call him *Impertinent*, than to call him an *Impoſtor*. For the firſt implies a Want of *Common Senſe* and *Reaſon*, the latter may ſuppoſe them both, mix'd with ſome Degrees of *deceitful Cunning*. But to aſcribe *Impertinence* to an *Apoſtle*, is the ſame thing as to call him an *Impoſtor*, and *Fool* too. For how can one who is inſpired by the *Spirit* of *Wiſdom*, common to all the *Apoſtles*, be ſo earneſt for the *Excommunication* and *Abſolution* of the *Inceſtuous Corinthian*, if *that Sentence* was to make no *Alteration* of his *Spiritual Condition* in the Eyes of God? The *Apoſtle* wrote to the *Corinthians* to *excommunicate* that wicked Perſon, to *mourn over him*, and

to

to *deliver him over to Satan*; and after his Repentance orders his *Abſolution*, left the poor Man *ſhould be ſwallowed up with Sorrow*, 2 *Cor.* 2. 7. yet all this great Pomp of Words and Ceremony, " neither added to God's Diſpleaſure, (as " the *Biſhop* ſays) nor would the want of it at all diminiſh it, " neither was it any ways conducive to the bringing the Man to Repentance, for " if he had died impenitent " in that Condition, the Sentence would have had no Effect " in the other World. " The *Biſhop's* Reaſon is becauſe " his [everlaſting] Condition would have been determined, " not by the *Sentence*, but by the *Rule* laid down by *Chriſt*, " and by his Righteous Application of it. " But is not a *Rule* of *Chriſt*, given us by his *Apoſtles*, that we ſhould *ſubmit ourſelves to thoſe that have the rule over us in the Lord?* and then, if the *Inceſtuous* had died Impenitent, had he not broke this *Rule* of *Submiſſion*? and would not that Breach of a *Righteous Rule* been a juſt Cauſe of his Condemnation? And yet the *Biſhop* denies that it would have had *any Effect* upon him in *another World*.

Tho' it is *pity* (as the Biſhop ſays *p.* 39.) that the very Name of *Excommunication* ſhould remain in the World, yet he allows that " the Nature and Uſefulneſs of the Thing, " is a ſufficient Juſtification of any *Chriſtians*, who ſet a " Mark upon the open Immorality and Wickedneſs of any " profeſs'd Chriſtians; even by refuſing to them the *Peculiar Tokens*, and *Marks* of *Chriſtian Communion*; as well " as by avoiding their Company and Converſation. —— " But (ſays he) what is this to the *Authority* of paſſing a Sentence, which ſhall determine their Condition, —— or " ſhall have Effect in another World?

I anſwer, 1. That to deny the *Peculiar Tokens*, and *Marks* of *Chriſtianity*, is an *Act* of *Authority*, and not of *private Diſcretion*, as the *Biſhop* would repreſent it.

2. That when a Sinner is *Authoritatively* denied the *uſe* of the *Bleſſed Sacrament* of the *Lord's Supper*, the *Participation* of the *Prayers* of the *Faithful*, the *Hearing* the *publick Preaching* of the *Word* of *God* &c. we muſt either ſay that the *Receiving the Sacrament* does not make our Condition at all better in the Eyes of God, or that the *Deprivation* of it is ſomething that makes it worſe; that the *Prayers* and *Interceſſions* of the *Faithful* do not at all alter our Spiritual Condition in the Eyes of God, that is, in plainer Engliſh, does us no manner of good, or that *Deprivation* of them is a Damage, and ſome way or other, prejudicial to the good of our Souls; that it is no Purpoſe to hear the *Word* of *God*, or

that

that the being deprived of *that Privilege*, is prejudicial to our Souls Health.

3. The *Biſhop* confounds " the not making one Tittle of " Alteration, in the Eyes of God, with reſpect to the Spiri- " tual Condition of a Chriſtian," with the having *no Effect in another World*, and the final Determination of a Man's eternal Happineſs. Every thing may be ſaid to have an *Effect in another World*, which at the Day of Judgment will any ways incline our Judge (the ever adorable Jeſus) to paſs the Sentence of Eternal Joy, or Eternal Miſery upon us, tho' it does not abſolutely determine our future State. It is therefore great Preſumption in the *Biſhop* to ſay, that *humane Excommunications*, tho' juſtly inflicted, have *no Effect in another World*, becauſe they do not *totally* and *certainly* determine the *future State* of a *Chriſtian*. Yet if ſuch *Sentences* are the *Effects* of that *Binding* and *Looſening Power*, which *Chriſt* gave to his *Miniſters*, and are juſtly inflicted, according to *Apoſtolical Example* and *Inſtitution*, with the ſame Deſign for which they were inflicted by St. *Paul*, viz. to preſerve the *Church* from *Hereſy* and *Scandal*; it is a bold Thing for the *Biſhop* to ſay, " that they have no Effect in another World, " that they make not one Tittle of Alteration of the Spiri- " tual Condition of a Chriſtian in the Eyes of God, that " they are (p. 112.) mere humane Engines, mere out- " cries of humane Terror, and vain Words." I am ſure *Chriſt* never taught him this Language in his *Goſpel*, nor can I think he received it from immediate Inſpiration.

I ſhall conclude this Head with one Obſervation for the Reader's Service, *viz.* That the main Deſign of the *Biſhop* in his *Book* and *Sermon*, being to gratify *all Diſſenters* with the overthrow of *all Spiritual Authority* in the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, the very *Life* and *Bond* of which is the *Excommunicating Power*, he firſt forgot that this *Excommunicating Power*, is not in uſe againſt *any Diſſenters* now in Being (what new *Diſſentions* may ariſe from the *Biſhop's Sermon* I can't tell) And therefore it was to no more purpoſe to exclaim againſt *Excommunication* at this time, than it is for an *Indian* firſt to kill his Enemy, and then feaſt upon his dead Carcaſs. But this was an happy Miſtake for all *Whoremongers*, *Adulterers*, and the like *Cuſtomers* of our *Eccleſiaſtical Courts*. For the *Biſhop* has freed *them*, as well as *Popiſh* and *Proteſtant Diſſenters* from all Fear of *humane Excommunications*, and aſſures *them* (upon the Word of a *Biſhop*) that the *Inceſtuous Corinthian* was as much in the *Favour* of *God*, after the *Sentence* of *Excommunication*, as before it. This is very *comfortable Doctrine* for

all

all impenitent Sinners. But his ſecond Miſtake is not ſo propitious to *Popiſh* and *Proteſtant Diſſenters*. For being tranſported with too much heat againſt the *Excommunications* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, threatned (heretofore practiced) againſt *Diſſenters*, he ſeems to have forgotten that the ſame *Excommunicating Power* is claimed, (and has been executed) by *them* againſt the *Members* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*; and tho' in the Heat of his Zeal, he overturns the *ordinary Diſcipline* of *all Chriſtian Churches*, (p. 38.) both of Friends and Enemies, for he ſays, " The Example of St. *Paul* can be no " Juſtification of the *ordinary Diſcipline* of *any* Chriſtian " Churches;" and he profeſſes " he does not know of any " Sort of *Excommunication* ordinarily practiſed, either in " *this* (that is, his own) or *other* Churches —— which can " be juſtified by it." So that if his *Lordſhip* ſhould ſeek for a *Church* which exerciſes no *Excommunicating Powers*, he can find none but the the *Religious Aſſembly* of the *Quakers*, who can exclude none from the uſe of their *Sacraments*, becauſe they have no *Sacraments* to uſe.

I proceed now to his ſixth and laſt Propoſition (p. 110.) " That no *Authority* can OBLIGE to external Communion, " which is not ABSOLUTE; nor any Power be OVER " others, which is not to determine thoſe *others*; nor any " *Excommunication*, with reſpect to the Favour of God, con- " tended for, but what is abſolutely Deciſive."

I anſwer, That I think I have already ſhewed, (and therefore may be excuſed from Repetition) that it is not the *Authority* of *any Church* (which is but a Community of Subjects, or Servants of Chriſt) which obliges us to *external Communion*, but the *Authority* of *Truth*, (which is the ſame with the *Authority* of *God*, who requires all to ſubmit to Truth) profeſſed and maintained in a *Church*, which obliges *all Men* to *External Communion* with her. And to make the matter ſtill more plain, I do profeſs my ſelf obliged to be a *Member* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, not becauſe it is eſtabliſhed by *Parliamentary*, or *Synodical*, or *Royal Authority*, but becauſe its *Doctrines* are *true*, its *Diſcipline Apoſtolical*, its *Sacraments rightly adminiſtred*, the *Succeſſion* of the *Miniſtry well* and *lawfully preſerved*, the *Claims* of *Juriſdiction juſtly* and *fairly made*. Where theſe *intrinſick Excellencies* are to be found, it is not the *abſolute Authority* of *Man*, but the *Abſolute Authority* of *God*, which obliges *all Men* to be of *that Communion*.

As for the ſecond Member of this laſt Propoſition, I preſume I have made it plain, that *one Man* may have *Power* over the Conſcience of *another*, tho' *that Power* is not ſo *unlimited*

limited as to determine the Man in *all Things*. *That Man* has *Authority* over *another*, whom that *other* cannot diſobey without diſobeying *God*. Thus *Princes* have *Power* over their *Subjects*, becauſe they obey not only for Fear of *Man*, but for Fear of *God*: *Parents* over their *Children*, becauſe *Honour thy Father and Mother, is the firſt Command with promiſe*: The *Rulers* of a *Church* over their reſpective *Flocks*, becauſe *it is the Will of God, that we ſhould ſubmit ourſelves to thoſe who rule over us in the Lord*. But none of theſe have *Authority* to determine us in *all Things*, becauſe *that* is the *Prerogative* of *God* alone which he will not give to another. I have ſhewed that the *Sentence* of *Excommunication* in the Practice of *our Church*, is not *Deciſive* of our *Eternal State*, that it is an *Apoſtolical Inſtitution*, and therefore not a *mere humane Engine*. Whence it follows that the *Lower Houſe* of *Convocation*, in claiming, or defending *theſe* and the like *Powers*, of *one Man over another*, are wrongfully accuſed by the *Biſhop* (p. 110.) as the *Patrons* or *Advocates* of an *abſolute*, or *unlimited Eccleſiaſtical Power*.

I thought I had finiſhed my Work againſt *Anarchy*, But the *Biſhop* calls me to new Labours. *Anarchy* is a Monſter of ſo many Heads, that if all are not cut off (and well ſinged too) the others will revive and be troubleſome to the World. He ſays (p. 113.) " that what he had affirmed about *private* " *Perſuaſion*, relates to the juſtification of a Man before God; " and not to the *Excellency of one Communion above Another*." I anſwer, that the *End* of *all Communions*, being the Juſtification of a Man before God, if *private Perſuaſion* make *all Communions* equally juſtifying before God, then it equals them *all* in the *main End* of their Juſtification; and as for leſſer Beauties and Advantages, they are little to be conſidered in ſo great an Affair.

He ſays, " his Doctrine is founded upon the Suppoſition, " that *one Communion* is more excellent than *another*, other- " wiſe it could not be propoſed to a Chriſtian as Matter of " *Choice*." I ſay that when *private Perſuaſion* has equalled the *main End* of *all Communions*, which is Juſtification before God, nothing is left for Matter of Choice, but ſuch accidental Excellencies, or Advantages, which are not worthy of much Thought or Labour in the chooſing.

P. 114. He endeavours ro retort the Arguments of the *Committee* upon themſelves. He ſays, That the *Method* propoſed by the *Committee* " is truly and juſtly liable to the " *Charge* which themſelves have brought againſt his *Scheme* " of *Church Authority*. For, (ſays he) If Men are not their own

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" judges in this Caſe; (*viz.* of chooſing what Communion " they think beſt) If there is any ſuch Church Authority " as can OBLIGE Men to a particular External Com- " munion; if there be a Power in ſome OVER others " in matters of Religion, ſo as to determine thoſe " others; if *humane Excommunications*, declared by this Au- " thority can claim the Anger of God to attend upon them: " then, (ſays he) all Communions are upon an equal Foot, " without regard to any Intrinſick Goodneſs, or whether " they be right or wrong; then no one Method of Religion " is, in itſelf, preferable to another, but all Methods are " alike with reſpect to the Favour of God. —— For, (ſays " he) it is evident that there is no Choice of Judgment left " to Chriſtians, where there is a ſuperior Authority to " OBLIGE them; or a Power OVER them in theſe Mat- " ters.

Here the *Biſhop* ſeems to triumph over the baffled *Committee*, and to call *all the Poſſe* of his ſtrongeſt Arguments to be preſent at this joyful Conqueſt, which at laſt will prove to be no more than a pleaſant Dream. For that *ſuperior Authority* that leaves no room for *Choice* to *private Conſciences*, which both *they*, and my ſelf contend for, is not the *Authority* of the *Church*; (a Community of Men as much ſubject to Chriſt as our ſelves.) But it is the *Authority* of *God*, bidding us to *buy the Truth and not to ſell it*, nothing can be of equal Value to it. It is *Chriſt*, who is Himſelf *the Truth, the Way, and the Life*, who obliges all his Diſciples to prefer *Truth*, to *Falſhood*; and intrinſick Goodneſs, to falſe appearance, and who leaves no free Choice of Error to his Subjects, but equally binds them all to chooſe and adhere to the beſt and trueſt Communion, as they will anſwer the contrary at their reſpective Perils. He has given bright Criterions enough to *Truth*, to make it diſtinguiſhable from *Error*, and if any, through ſtubborneſs, or Weakneſs, do err, he may pardon in his *Mercy*, but never in his *Wiſdom* can juſtify the *Choice* of a *ſinful Communion*.

The *Biſhop* might have obſerved, if he had pleaſed, that we do not bring Arguments againſt *Popiſh*, or *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, from the mere *Authority* of our *Church*, but from the *Holy Scriptures*, as the Repoſitories of all neceſſary Truth and Knowledge, which is done upon this rational Preſumption, that *God* is always a *Friend* to *Truth*, but an *Enemy* to *Error*. Therefore we ſay, that Men are not their own *Judges*, to chooſe whatever *Communion* they think *beſt*, in their Sincerity, but are always bound to chooſe *that* which really is *Beſt*

and *Trueſt* in itſelf. We do not ſay that there is any ſuch *Church Authority* as can *oblige* Men to the Choice of an *Erroneous Communion*; but that there is a *Divine Authority*, which always *obliges* us to the Choice of *that Communion* which is moſt Orthodox in the *Faith once delivered to the Saints*. We do not ſay, that there is a *Power* in *ſome over others* to determine thoſe *others* to believe any Doctrine that is falſe, by the *Authority* of the *Church*; (whether by *Church*, we underſtand the *Rulers* of a *Church*, or the *Body* of the Faithful.) The *Rulers* of a *Church* are, by a ſuperior Law of God, as much obliged to the Belief of nothing but what is true, as *Thoſe* whom they pretend to rule and govern. *If we* (ſays the Apoſtle *Gal.* 1. 8.) *or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Goſpel than that which we have preached, let him be accurſed.* And if the *Apoſtles* had no *Authority* to preach any thing but the *Truth*, none who are their *Succeſſors* in *Government* can pretend to a more extenſive Authority, than what *Chriſt* beſtowed upon *them*. But yet the *Rulers* of the *Church*, when they preach the ſame *Truth* which *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* preached, have the ſame *Authority* to oblige the *Conſciences* of Men to *aſſent*, which Chriſt gave to the *Apoſtles* themſelves. And this we call *Church Authority*. Otherwiſe the *Government* of *Chriſt*, and all Obligation to aſſent to *Truth*, had ended with the Lives of *him* and his *Apoſtles*.

If it be ſaid that then the *Authority* of a *Biſhop*, or a *Synod* of *Biſhops* is no greater than the *Authority* of an *Infant*, or a *Layman*, for *Truth* has always the ſame *Obliging Power*, when ſpoken by one Perſon, as by another, as the Pſalmiſt ſays, *Pſ.* 8. 2. *Out of the Mouth of babes and ſucklings haſt thou ordained ſtrength.* I grant it would be ſo if we were in a State of Nature, before Government began, nay or even in a State of Infidelity, before *Chriſt* had ſettled an Order of Men, to *preach the Goſpel in his Name to all Nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt.* Math. 28. 19. But when this Order of Men makes known the *Truth* of the *Goſpel* to *others*, thoſe *others*, (to ſpeak in the elegant Style of the *Biſhop*) can't be excuſed by the *Authority* of *private Judgment*, or *Sincerity*, for disbelieving *thoſe Truths* any more now, than *they* were in the Time of our *Saviour*, who in the *Sincerity* of their *Zeal* for the *Law* of *Moſes crucified to themſelves the Lord of Life*. For as in abſolute Monarchies, the Notification of the *Will* of the *Prince*, is *that* which obliges the *Subject* to Obedience, yet the Notification by common Rumor, or by private Perſons not concerned in the Government, is not equally obligatory to the *Subject*, with

with that Notification which is made by *Heralds at Arms*, or other known *Officers* of the *Crown*, maintained and ſet apart for that very Purpoſe, to Notify the *Will* of the *Prince* to his *People*; ſo ſince *Chriſt* has ſetled *Men* in his *Church*, on purpoſe to publiſh to the World, *thoſe Truths*, the Belief of which he thought neceſſary to Salvation, tho' *Truth* has in it an *obligatory Power* by the *Will* of *Chriſt*, yet it is *more obligatory* coming immediately from *Chriſt's Commiſſioned Officers*, than from *thoſe* who thruſt themſelves into the *Work* of the *Miniſtry*, without being *lawfully called* unto it. But the *Biſhop's* Notion of the *Authority* of a *private Conſcience*, and his Doctrine of *Sincerity*, do take away *neceſſary Obligation* from *Truth*, and transfers it (very cunningly) to *mere Authority*, and then give the *deciſive Authority* to the *Perſuaſion* and *Sincerity* of a *private Conſcience*, without any Regard to *Truth* at all. Hence he argues, (p. 114.) "That if there be any "ſuch Church Authority, as can oblige Men to a particular "Church Communion —— then all Communions are upon "an equal Foot." Whereas the *Committee* never taught that there ever was ſuch a *mere Authority* in any Part of *Chriſt's Catholick Church*, but that there was enough both of *Divine Miſſion*, and *Divine Truth* in *their own* (and ſo ought the *Biſhop* to teach too, if he could be perſuaded to act ſincerely) to oblige the *Conſciences* of *all Men* to aſſent to her *Doctrines*, and to an *External* and *Internal Communion*, who live within the Bounds of her *Juriſdiction*; and that *ſhe* does not ſtand upon an *equal Foot* with the *ſeparate Congregations*, becauſe *they* have not an *equal Portion* of *Truth*, either of *Miſſion* or *Doctrine* in *them*. Nor does it follow (as the *Biſhop* ſays *ib.*) that Men ſo chooſing *our Communion* can have no regard to *intrinſick Goodneſs*, or whether it is right or wrong, that on the contrary it is the *intrinſick Goodneſs*, and *that Truth*, which is the meaſure of Things, that, by the immutable *Will* of *God*, obliges to *that Communion* ſo choſen.

The *Biſhop* argues, "that if there is a Power in ſome "OVER others, in Matters of Religion, ſo as to determine thoſe Others" (here I obſerve he writes OVER in Capital Letters, and the Word *others* with a Capital O, becauſe in theſe two great O's conſiſts the main Strength of moſt of his *Lordſhip's* Demonſtrations) then, all thoſe numerous abſurdities muſt follow which the *Committee* has aſcribed to the *Biſhop's* Doctrine of *Sincerity*, viz, "that no Regard is to be "had to Intrinſick Goodneſs; —— that no one Method of "Religion is preferable, in itſelf, to another —— and that "no Difference at all is left between the Popiſh and our Re-

formed Church, &c." All which would be true, if thoſe *ſome Perſons* who claimed this Power over *others*, could determine the *Choice* of a *Communion* for *others*, which is impoſſible to be done. But if the *Biſhop* by theſe *ſome others*, mean chiefly the *Biſhops* of his *own Communion*, in *Synods*, or *National Councils* met to propoſe *true Doctrines*, as Conditions of Communion, the Truth of their *Miſſion*, and the Truth of their *Doctrine*, will give them an *Authority* over *others*, and oblige them to *external Communion* with a *Particular Church*, tho' in their *private Judgment* they abhor it. For *private Judgment* makes no alteration of *Intrinſick goodneſs*, nor does an *Erroneous Conſcience* in *Matters* of *Faith* free from *Sin*, tho' it is ſome mitigation of the *Guilt* of it. I wonder therefore the *Biſhop* ſhould ſay, that "*Chriſtians* (according to the Doctrine of the *Committee*) are as much OBLIGED by the "*Church Authority* of *Italy*, or *Spain* (p. 115.) as by the *Authority* of the *Church* of *England*," when he knows in his Conſcience, that our Controverſy with the *Church* of *Rome*, is not about the *Authority*, or *Juriſdiction* of *National Churches*, but about the *Truth* of *Doctrinal Propoſitions*, and the Excellency of *Truth* above *Error*. This the *Biſhop* obviates by ſaying (*ib.*) that "If a Man is to have ſome Regard to the Intrinſick Goodneſs of Things; and to the Excellency of one Communion above another, then there is an End of all humane Authority to OBLIGE him to one particular external Communion; an end of all Power of ſome OVER Others,—— the Man is to be guided by his own private Judgment; and then (ſays he) we are come back to *that Doctrine* which I have delivered, and againſt which they have declared with ſo much Zeal."

Surely when the *Biſhop* wrote this, he was under ſome extraordinary *Tranſports* of *Heat*, and not in that *Coolneſs* of *Temper* which he commends in his *Sermon* as the *Beſt Diſpoſition* in the World for *Devotion*. For does he think himſelf able to perſuade the World, that his Doctrine of *private Perſuaſion*, which teaches that a Man's *ſincere Choice* of an *Erroneous Communion* juſtifies him before God, (which is as much as can be done by the *Choice* of the *Beſt* and *pureſt Communion* extant) is the ſame with *that Doctrine*, which teaches that a Man can't be juſtified before God, only by the *Choice* of *one* that is *True* and *Apoſtolical*? Is it the ſame Thing to be determined in our *Choice* by the *Intrinſick Excellency* of a *Communion*, and by the *falſe Appearance* of *Excellency*, when there is nothing but Corruption at the Bottom? Is it a good Conſequence that becauſe a Man is under a natural neceſſity of

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Judging for *himſelf*, therefore he is not under a moral neceſſity of *Judging* according to *Truth?* Or, that becauſe he is to have regard to the *Intrinſick Goodneſs* in his *Choice* of a *Communion*, he is come back to the *Biſhop's* Doctrine, That a *Sincere Perſuaſion* of that *Intrinſick Goodneſs*, will juſtify him before God, whether there be any *Intrinſick Truth*, or *Goodneſs* in *that Communion* or no? We ſee with what an Appetite to *Truth* God has created our Nature, by that earneſt Contention for *Truth*, in matters of little Moment to Mankind, which our *Virtuoſo's* ſhew in many of their Writings. How earneſtly will *Chronologiſts* contend againſt one another for a Year, a Month, or a Day, in the Account of any Hiſtorical Relation; and what Labour will ſome *Virtuoſo's* undergo to find out the true number of a *Piſmires* Eggs in her ſecond Lawter? And ſhall a *Chriſtian* in matters of the higheſt Moment, ſuch as *thoſe* ought to be which divide *Communions*, be at liberty to chooſe *Truth*, or *Falſhood*, and without any Mutation of the Favour of God, provided the *Choice* be made with a *ſincere Perſuaſion*. The *Papiſt* differs from *us*, about a *Supreme Judge* of *Controverſy*, the *Arians* and *Socinians* about the *Divinity* of the *Son* of *God*, and the *Perſonality* of the *Holy Ghoſt*; will the *Biſhop* ſay it is a Thing indifferent to God, whether we admit of the *Papal Authority*, to ſet up a Mint for the Coining a great Number of falſe Doctrines, or whether we take the *Holy Scriptures* for the *ſole Rule* of *Faith* and *Manners?* Whether *we honour the Son, as we honour the Father*, or whether we detract from his *Honour*, as much as we can, and reduce *him* to the imperfect Order of *Created Beings?* Whether we pray *for*, and *to* the *Holy Ghoſt*, as the *Sanctifier of the Elect People of God*, or whether we rob *him* of his *Perſonality*, and reſolve *him* into an *Immaginary Force*, *Energy*, or *Power* of *God?* God can't juſtify the *ſincere Choice* of theſe *different Communions*, without being indifferently diſpoſed to *all* of theſe Opinions, (and a thouſand more Differences that might be named) and diveſting himſelf of all his eſſential Attributes, of which the *love* of *Truth* muſt be one. To bring us back from the Doctrine of *Intrinſick Truth* and *Goodneſs*, to That of *Sincere Perſuaſion*, *Authority* of *private Judgment*, &c. is to bring us back from the *Kingdom* of *Light*, to the *Kingdom* of *Darkneſs* and *Error*. But ſure I am, *our Church* never claims *any Authority* over *Diſſenters*, but what was founded in the *Truth* of her *Miſſion* and *Doctrines*, Nay the *Biſhop* himſelf confeſſes, towards the latter End of his Book, that no *Church* but the *Church* of *Rome* does claim an *Abſolute Church Authority* over *all Diſſenters*. He might there-

fore

ſore well have omitted this miſrepreſentation of the *Charge* of the *Committee* (p. 115.) as if they aſcribed a *Church Authority* to the *Kingdom* of *England*, but denied it to *Italy* and *Spain*. For his Conſcience muſt needs tell him, that the *Church* of *England* never claimed *any Authority* ſeparated from the *Truth* of *God's Word*, over *any Diſſenters* whatſoever, and that ſhe never did deny as much *Authority* as was founded in *Truth*, to the *Churches* of *France*, *Italy* or *Spain*, or any other *Churches* whatſoever.

The *Biſhop* (p. 3.) lays it down as a maxim by which his Doctrines are to be tried, That "whatſoever is contradi-"ctory to thoſe *Fundamental Principles* of the *Reformation*, "without which it could never have been at firſt, and now "can never be defended, cannot knowingly be received by "*any true Proteſtant*." And (p. 117.) he endeavours to apply this *Rule* to the *Charge* of the *Committee*, as if *they* by advancing a *Church Authority* to oblige *others* to *External Communion* with the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, had overthrown the *Foundation* of *their own Church*, and *all other Proteſtant Churches*.

"For (ſays he) if there be a *Church Authority* to OBLIGE "Men to a particular Communion; a Power in ſome, "OVER others, in this Caſe; a Right of Excommunica-"tion, ſo as to affect Mens Eternal Salvation; and this "Matter of *Church Communion* is not to be left to Men's own "private Judgments, and Conſciences: Then, &c.

To all which it is ſufficient to ſay, what I have already ſaid, That neither *our Church*, nor the *Committee*, did ever challenge a *mere Church Authority*, ſeparate from *Intrinſick Truth* or contradictory to it, to oblige any Perſon to *External Communion*. It is not *our Church*, but it is *God*, who has not left it to Mens own *private Judgments* and *Conſciences*, to chooſe what *Communion* they pleaſe, becauſe *ſome Communions* are *Idolatrous*, *Heretical*, and *Schiſmatical*; and God can no more love the *Believe* of *that Religion* which is not *True*, than he can love *thoſe Morals* which are *unholy* and *impure*; to ſay the contrary, is to ſet the *Authority* of every Man's *private Judgment*, and *Conſcience* (as the *Biſhop* falſly calls it) above not only *Synods*, and *General Councils*, but above the *Authority* of *God* himſelf; and makes *Conſcience*, which in its firſt Conception implies a Knowledge of our Subjection, the *Sole* and *Supreme Empreſs* of an *humane Soul*, exempting her from any neceſſity of believing *any Article* of the *Chriſtian Faith*, which *God* himſelf has commanded us to believe.

He adds (*ib.*) "I beg to know, how can the *Reformation* "itſelf be juſtified, which was founded upon the *Right* of

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" *Chriſtians*, to have recourſe to the *Goſpel*, for themſelves; " and to throw off all that *Church Authority*, which aſſumed " a Right of OBLIGING to the *Romiſh* Communion; and a " Right ſuperior to their own private Judgments and Con- " ſciences."

I anſwer, it was founded upon a *Right* of *Chriſtians* to have recourſe to the *Goſpel*, but not upon *any Right* they have to interpret *that Goſpel* in a wrong Senſe, and to draw *falſe Doctrines* out of that inexhauſtible Magazine of Eternal verities. *Truth* is always one and the ſame, and if *all Chriſtians* were followers of *Truth*, there could be but *one Chriſtian Communion* in the *Chriſtian World*, as there was but *One* in the firſt Beginning of it. Our *Diviſions* of *Communion* ariſe from *falſe Doctrines*, and if God juſtify the *Believers* of *falſe Doctrines*, equally with *thoſe* who profeſs the *Truth*, then the *Biſhop* muſt put it into his Definition of a *God*, that he is a Being of infinite Perfections who equally loves both *Truth* and *Error*. The *Foundation* of the *Reformation* was the *Superiority* which God has given to *Truth* above the *Authority* of *Popes* and *Councils*, and not the *Superiority* which God has given to *private Judgment*, and *private Conſcience*, over *publick Judgments*, or *publick Conſcience*, much leſs over *Truth it ſelf*, to which our *Saviour* himſelf was not aſhamed to appeal, when he was upon Earth. *Joh.* 8. 46. *Which of you convinceth me of ſin, and if I ſay the Truth, why do ye not believe me?* And tho' *private Judgment* and *Conſcience* had their Force in *Jews*, as in *Chriſtians*, (for humane Nature was always the ſame) yet thoſe *Jews* who believed not were to be damned, and the *Apoſtle* ſays *were cut off for their Unbelief*.

Upon this Bottom our *Church* ſtands, and upon this Bottom we are willing to trie our Cauſe, either with the *Church* of *Rome*, the *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, or (if his *Lordſhip* pleaſes) with the *Biſhop* of *Bangor*. We will urge no *Authority* of our *Canons*, *Creeds*, or *Articles* to *thoſe* who are not of *our own Communion*, and when we urge them to *thoſe* who are of *our own Communion*, it ſhall not be as Demonſtrations of the *Truth*, but of the Inſincerity of *Thoſe* who firſt *ſubſcribe*, and then *oppoſe* them,

His *Lordſhip* farther urges (p. 118.) " If Men are not to " judge for themſelves in Religion, and Church Communi- " on; if *Church Authority* be a ſufficient OBLIGATION to " determine them: Then, our Fore-fathers ought not in " Conſcience to have ſeparated from the *Church* of *Rome*." I anſwer, no more they had not, if *all her Doctrines* had been

true.

true. For the Conteſt was not of *one humane Authority* againſt *another humane Authority*, nor did the World ſee, as in the War between *Pompey* and *Cæſar*;

—— *pares Aquilas, & Pila minantia Pilis.*

But it was between the higheſt of *humane Authorities*, and the plaineſt of *Scriptural Truths*, and then it more reſembled the Wars of the *Romans* with *barbarous Nations*. He ſays, *(ib.)* "If Men are their own Judges by the Laws of God, "and of Chriſt, in this Matter." I ſay, if Men are *their own Judges* in this Matter, (of chooſing a Communion) then there is an End of the *Judgment* of *God* and of *Chriſt*. *God* will have nothing to do with *Hereticks*, *Schiſmaticks*, and *Unbelievers*, and *falſe Teachers* at the Day of Judgment, but to confirm the Sentence of Juſtification, which their own *Conſciences* have before paſſed upon them. They are juſtified beforehand by the *ſincere Belief* of their own *Heretical* and *Schiſmatical Tenents*, and who ſhall condemn *them* whom *Conſcience* has abſolved?

The *Biſhop* denies this Conſequence, and ſays, that "then "there is Juſtification of the *Reformation*, and particularly "of the *Proteſtant Church* of *England*, and of the good Effect "of *his Doctrine* upon that Church itſelf, which he is ac-"cuſed of injuring."

I am very glad to hear of the *good Effect* of his *Lordſhip's Doctrine* upon the *Church* of *England*, and therefore will give the Reader a *Liſt* of the *great Services*, ſo *gratious* a *Son* has done for his *indulgent Mother*.

1. He has taught all Men, that none are obliged to hold *external Communion* with Her, which tends to the leſſening the Number of her *Children*, and conſequently preventing the *Charge* and *Care* of a *numerous Family*.

2. He has inſtructed all Men that her *Excommunicating Power* is a Cheat, and a mere *humane Engine* of *Apoſtolical Invention*; and tho' St. *Paul* calls it a *Rod*, to frighten *Children*, it is no more than a *Bunch* of *Feathers*, which cannot make them ſmart, nor have *any Effect* upon them. This is done with a good Intention, that the leſs they fear, the more they may love.

3. He has taught her *Biſhop's*, that they have *no Power* OVER others, either to puniſh, or cenſure the *Servants* of *another Maſter*; ſo that being eaſed of the Care of Government, they have little to do, but to ſtay at home, and receive their Revenues.

4. He has alſo releaſed them of that ungrateful Obligation to drive away *falſe Teachers*, *who come in Sheeps cloathing*, *but in-*

Inwardly are ravenous Wolves. For he has proved that every Man has a natural Right to chooſe whatſoever is wrong, and that they who pretend to diveſt them of that Original Privilege of humane Nature, which *Chriſt* has confirmed to them, are invaders of his *Kingdom*, and puniſhable for *high Treaſon* againſt the *Court* of *Heaven*. And therefore if a *Biſhop* ſees a *Wolf* running away with a *Lamb* of his Flock, he may preſume that it is with no Intention to hurt it, but to nouriſh it up with the *ſincere Milk* of *falſe Doctrines*, which are as wholſome as *True Doctrines*, where the *Perſuaſion* is *ſincere*, and intire, if we can believe the *Biſhop*.

5. He has inſtructed the *Chancellors* of every *Dioceſs*, that their *Excommunications* of *Adulterous*, and *Inceſtuous Offenders*, are but like the *Thunderbolts* of the *Poetical Jupiter*, They may make a great *Noiſe*, but ſeldome hurt any; and ſometimes (as Naturaliſts ſay) melt the *Silver* in a Man's *Pocket*, without having the leaſt ill-effect upon his *Perſon*. This may excite their endeavours to obtain in the next *Seſſion* of *Parliament*, ſome better *Engine* of *Government* and to throw away the old one; or excite the *Parliament* to take even that away, and leave them nothing but *private Judgment*, *private Conſcience*, and *ſincere Perſuaſion*, the ſtrong Foundations of all *Eccleſiaſtical Powers*.

6. He has ſhewed her a Way, whereby her *Clergy* may preach without *Learning*, and live without a *ſettled Maintenance*. The *Vows* of a *voluntary Poverty* may be ſuperſtitious in the *Church* of *Rome*, but a *conſtrained Poverty*, in his *Lordſhip's* Opinion, would be very much for the *Spiritual Advantage* of the *Church* of *England*. His wonderful *Invective* againſt *Learning*, and the *Hints* he gives of the great Damage done, by a *ſettled Maintenance* to the *Chriſtian Church*, demonſtrate the *publick Spirit* of this great *States-man*, in *ſincerely* endeavouring to eaſe the *Kingdom* of unneceſſary Charges.

7. His Invectives againſt thoſe *Acts* of *Parliament* which give her ſome Security againſt *Diſſenters*, may ſeem cruel to thoſe, who think that the abrogating *thoſe Laws*, would expoſe her naked to the Laſh of *Enthuſiaſtic Fury*; yet his not laſhing her with his own Hand (excepting in one Sermon (as 'tis ſaid) againſt Superſtition) does abundantly ſhew his *Lordſhip's* compaſſionate Diſpoſition, and true Chriſtian Moderation.

But laſtly, his taking away her old Foundation of *Truth*, and *Intrinſick Goodneſs*, and giving her a new Foundation of the *Authority* of *private Judgment*, *private Conſcience*, and *private Perſuaſion* (tho' perhaps private Intereſt is the Corner Stone) is that great Piece of Service of which he boaſts ſo

much (p. 119.) and muſt be conſidered with all the ſeriouſneſs and gravity that becomes ſo great a Subject.

He there ſays, that " if Men are to be determined by their " own private Judgment; or that there is no ſuch Thing as " *humane Authority* to OBLIGE them to any *one Particular* " *External Communion*; and no Power in ſome OVER " Others, (let the Reader obſerve well the two great O's) " then there is an End of *all Popery* —— The ſeparation of " *Proteſtants* —— was Right and Good, and *even* the *Church* of *England*" (which Expreſſion ſhrewdly intimates that of all Proteſtant Churches ſhe is the worſt) " ſtands upon a " good and ſolid Foundation."

Now it is my Misfortune to diſſent from his *Lordſhip* in all theſe Particulars. It ſeems to me that theſe *Doctrines* are ſo far from putting an *End* to *Popery*, that they give it as good and ſolid a Foundation, as to any of the *Proteſtant Churches*, *our own* not excepted. For if all Men are to *judge* for themſelves in Religion, then a *Papiſt* has as much Right to judge for *himſelf* in Matters of Religion, as any *Proteſtant* can have to judge for *himſelf*. For tho' this *great Writer* has undertaken to prove *Popiſh Kings* and *Princes* to be *Ideots* and *Madmen*, I hope he will not undertake to demonſtrate, that *Papiſts* are *no Men*, nor partakers of the *Common rights* of humane Nature. If the Controverſies between *us*, and the *Church* of *Rome* were to be determined by any *Humane Authority*, abſtractedly as ſuch conſidered, no doubt but the *Papiſts* would have had the Advantage on their Side, for as much as at the *Reformation*, there was a far greater Appearance of *humane Authority* of *Biſhops*, *Kings*, *Princes*, *Parliaments*, *Councils*, than there was for the *Reformation*. But if Controverſies are to be determined by their Congruity to *Truths* in the *Goſpel* delivered, then, and only then, there muſt be an *End* of *Popery*, ſo far as it ſignifies, a Syſtem of Opinions, that has *no Foundation* in the *Holy Scriptures*, nor in the *Eternal Maxims* of *Humane Reaſon*. It is not the Right which every Man has to *judge* for *himſelf* in Religion, but *that Obligation* all Men are under, by the *Authority* of *God*, and *his Chriſt*, to believe *that* which is *True*, and abhor *that* which is *Falſe*, in all Religious Controverſies, which is the *ſolid* and *immutable Foundation*, not only of the *Reformation*, but of the whole *Chriſtian Religion*. If (as the *Biſhop* ſays) Men are to *judge* for *themſelves* in Religion, *Paganiſm* in the *Roman Empire*, and *Mahometiſm* in the *Turkiſh Dominions*, had as good, and as ſolid a Foundation, as *Chriſtianity* in either of them. For no doubt but many *Pagans* and

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Muſſel-men, are, and were, as fully perſuaded of the *Truth* of their own *Superſtition*, as any *Jew* or *Chriſtian* can be of the *Truth* of his *Religion*. But to talk of the *Rights* of *private Judgment*, in a Religion founded upon *Divine Revelation*, is quite to overthrow *all Authority* in the *Revelation*, and to give, to *every private Man*, liberty to contradict the *Revelation*, made by *God*, without the leaſt danger of incurring his Diſpleaſure. To what purpoſe ſhould *God* make a *Revelation* to Mankind, if every Man has a *Right* to interpret *that Revelation* as he pleaſes, and to be a *Judge* of the ſenſe, in oppoſition to the true Meaning of *every Law* of *Faith* and *Manners*, by God himſelf revealed unto him? The *Malefactor* who ſtands at the *Bar*, and the *Judge* who ſits upon the *Bench*, are both, in ſome ſenſe, *Judges* and *Interpreters* of the *Law* of the *Land*, for both muſt judge and interpret for themſelves, ſince no body elſe can judge or interpret for them; But the *Malefactor* is hang'd, if he interprets the *Law* in a Senſe quite contrary to its true Meaning; and the *Judge* is accountable to his *Sovereign*, if by a falſe Interpretation of the *Law*, he does vex or oppreſs the *Subject*. Our *Reformation* therefore could not be founded upon the *Right* every Man has to chooſe his own Religion, ſince no Man can have a *Right* to contradict *God*, and corrupt and falſify a *true Revelation*. And if it had ſtood only upon *that imaginary Right*, the *Proteſtants* might have lawfully receeded from *that Right*, ſince every Man can give away *that Right* which is *his own*, without doing Injuſtice to another. Nothing leſs than the abſolute neceſſity of embracing *True*, and rejecting *falſe Doctrines* could juſtify our *Reformation* from the Imputation of *that Schiſm* which the *Romans* ſo plentifully throw upon her.

The *Biſhop* thinks himſelf bountiful enough to the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, in giving her a *Foundation* in *that Right* every private Man has to chooſe for himſelf, and to be determined by no ſuperior *humane Authority*, and in that wonderful Maxim, ſo famous for the two great O's, that amongſt *Chriſtians* there is not a Power in *ſome* OVER *Others* in matters of *Religion*. But this *Foundation* which the *Biſhop* lays for the ſupport of *Chriſt's Catholick Church*, and the *Church* of *England* as a Sound Part thereof, is as able to ſuſtain *old Paganiſm*, and modern *Mahomitiſm*, as the weight of the whole *Chriſtian Religion*. For no doubt but many of the *antient Pagans* (and living *Mahomitans*) were as firmly perſuaded of the Truth of their *Idolatrous*, and *Superſtitious Worſhip*, as *Chriſtians* can be of *that* which was founded upon

the *Authority* of *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*. If *they* had a natural and indefeaſible *Right* to be determined by their own *private Judgment*, God could not, in Juſtice, have been angry with them, for making uſe of *that natural Right*, in chooſing the *Sun* and *Moon* and the *Stars* (beſides the Work of their own Hands) to be the *Objects* of *Religious Worſhip*. But St. *Paul* condemns them for making a wrong uſe of this pretended *natural Right*. (Rom. 1. 21.) *Becauſe that when they knew God* (*i. e.* might have known the eſſential attributes of the Divine Nature by Reaſon,) *they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful*, &c. *and* (ver. 23.) *changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four footed Beaſts, and creeping things*. Their *Worſhip* was not odious to *God* (as he often declares it to be) becauſe it was contrary to their *Conſcience*, or againſt the Senſe of their *private Judgments*, but becauſe their *Conſciences* were *darkned*, and dictated a *falſe Worſhip* to them. So the *Apoſtle* determines the Caſe, (ver. 21.) *and their fooliſh Heart* (an Hebraiſm for Conſcience) *was darkned*. As the ſame *Apoſtle* explains himſelf more fully, *Eph.* 4. 17, 18. *I ſay therefore and teſtify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity* (that is, Error) *of their Mind. Having the underſtanding* (i. e. the very *Syntereſis* of Conſcience, or grand Repoſitory of all uſeful Maxims) *darkned, being alienated from the life of God, thro' the ignorance that is in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of their Heart*. Here the *Apoſtle* takes away *all Authority* of *Juſtification* from an *erroneous Conſcience*, and gives it *all* to *Truth*, to which it does belong. And this the ſame *Apoſtle* farther confirms (*Acts* 17. 30.) in his Diſpute with the *Grecian Philoſophers*, *the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all Men every where to repent*. This plainly ſhews that *Divine Revelation* ſuperceeds *all* pretended *Right* of every Man's chooſing his own Religion, for neither had the *Gentiles* any ſuch *Right*, before, or without *Divine Revelation*, but were ſinners for chooſing *falſe Gods*, when Reaſon obliged them to the *Worſhip* of the *True*, and that when Men are under the Lights and Directions of the *Goſpel*, *God commandeth all Men to repent* of *all Pretences* to a *Right* to chooſe their own Religion, and to receive *that Truth* which in the *Goſpel* was delivered to them. *Chriſtians* in the midſt of ſo much Light having no more *Right* to chooſe *falſe Opinions*, (or Communions) than the *Heathens* had to chooſe *falſe Gods* for themſelves.

If the *Biſhop* and his Friends ſhould ſay, (as no doubt they will) that there is a great Difference between the *different*

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Communions ſet up amongſt *Chriſtians*, in oppoſition to the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, and that of the *Worſhip* of the *true God*, and the *Worſhip* of *Idols*; I grant it is true, becauſe the *Worſhip* of *falſe Gods* deſtroys the whole *Chriſtian Religion*, whereas *Hereſy* and *Schiſm* deſtroy, or damage only ſome neceſſary *Parts* of it. *Hereſy* is either a *denial* of ſome *Fundamental Article* of *Faith*, or an *Addition* of ſomething as *neceſſary* to the *Antient Faith*, which our *Saviour* and his *Apoſtles* never made *neceſſary* to it. In the firſt Senſe, *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* were *Hereticks*, becauſe they denied the *Reſurrection*. In the ſecond, the *Gnoſticks* were *Hereticks* becauſe they added all their vain *Æons*, and *Pagan Genealogies* to the *Chriſtian Faith*. *Schiſm*, is a *Diſobedience* to an *Authority* ſettled by *Chriſt* in his *Church*, and confined (for the moſt part) to ſome particular *Diſtrict* by *Humane Laws*, as I obſerved before. I have no diſpute at preſent with either *Popiſh* or *Proteſtant Diſſenters*, but rather with a *New Sect* of Men riſing up amongſt us, who ſeem to have a greater averſion from the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, than the *Diſſenters*, but not ſo much *Zeal* and *Sincerity* for the true Intereſt of the *Chriſtian Religion*. The *Biſhop* has erected a *Kingdom* for *Chriſt* in this World, which is capable of receiving them all, (for he does not ſuppoſe his Subjects to conſiſt only of Baptized *Chriſtians*, but of *all* who call themſelves Chriſtians, though they reject Baptiſm, and the Supper of the Lord) and not only of receiving, but of indemnifying them from *all Errors* in *Doctrine*, of which they can be *ſincerely* Guilty, and from *all Diſobedience* to *Spiritual Guides* or *Rulers*; (for in Chriſt's Kingdom none have Power over others.) And then he thinks he does *our Church* great Service, in placing her upon the ſame *Foundation*, (the right of every Man to chooſe his own Communion) which will as firmly ſuſtain all the *Hereſies* and *Schiſms*, which ever yet appeared in the *Chriſtian* World. But I hope that *She*, and *all generous Diſſenters*, will diſdain the Thoughts of ſtanding upon any other *Foundation* than that of *Truth*, as it was delivered by *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles*.

Yet this is that ſtrong *Foundation* of our *Church*, which the *Biſhop* pretends to give her. He ſays (*p.* 118.) "I mention the *Foundation* of this Church particularly, becauſe "a *Thouſand Panegyricks* upon its Beauty and Excellency, are "of ſmall Importance, if the very GROUND it ſtands upon, "be declared to be rotten and unſound." I anſwer, if the Right to maintain *contradictory Tenents*, and chooſe *repugnant* and *oppoſite Communions*, according to the Determination of *every private Man's Judgment*, is a ſtronger *Foundation* than

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that of *Truth* itſelf, then I am ready to believe, whenever the *Biſhop* commands me, that a *Quagmire* is as *ſolid a Body* as a *Rock* of *Adamant*.

And whereas the *Biſhop* ſays, *(ib.)* that " ſuppoſing (not " granting) that he had oppoſed ſome particular Declara- " tions of this *Church*, which may have been made thro' Hu- " mane Frailty, and the Weakneſs of Humane Nature, " not taking in all Circumſtances, nor ſeeing plainly the " Contradiction of them to its own *ſole Foundation*; yet *this* " might be excuſed when we ſee it cannot otherwiſe be op- " poſed or contradicted, but by reviving ſuch *Claims*, as de- " ſtroy that very *Foundation* itſelf. "

I anſwer, nothing can be more injurious to *our Church*, than to ſay that ſhe can chalenge no *Obedience* to her *Canons*, or *Conſtitutions*, nor *Belief* to her *Creeds* and *Articles*, without reviving ſuch *Claims* as deſtroy her very *Foundation*. For we can defend our *Canons*, by ſhewing that they are within the Bounds of *that Authority*, which *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* left to be exerciſed in his *Church* for ever. And as for our *Creeds* and *Articles*, if we cannot prove their *Truth*, we will reſign all their *Authoritative Obligation*, to the *Grandee* of the *Roman Communion*. But we are ſatisfied ſo well, that the *Foundation* of our *Reformation* is laid in the *Eternal Truth* of a moſt glorious *Goſpel*, that if the *Biſhop* will undertake to affirm the contrary, in Favour of *Quakeriſm*, or of the *Romiſh Religion*, we will ſay to *him* as a *Nobleman* of *Rome* ſaid to another of his own Rank, who ſpoke too largely in *Pompey*'s Camp, of the ſtrength of *Cæſar*'s *Forces*, *Tranſi ad Hoſtes, ut nos metuas, Go over to the Enemy, and then you ſhall be taught to fear our Power*. I ſay the ſole *Foundation* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church*, is the immutable *Truth* of the *Goſpel*: let him reſtore *that* to us, and take to *himſelf* and his *Diſſenting Friends*, the rotten and unſtable *Foundation* of *private Opinion*.

I muſt confeſs the *Biſhop* does not place the *ſafety* of the *Eſtabliſhed Church alone* upon *this Foundation* of *private Judgment*, but the *ſafety* alſo, and very *being* of all other *Chriſtian Churches*; which plainly ſhews, his *Lordſhip* may be as well affected to *her*, as to the *whole ſtate* of *Chriſt's Church militant here upon Earth*,, for whoſe welfare we are taught dayly to Pray. For notwithſtanding his more than tacit Inſinuation that " thro' Humane Frailty, and the Weakneſs of Humane " Nature, " (which I always thought was the ſame Thing) *ſhe* had made ſome Declarations againſt *that* (private Judgment) which is her *ſole Foundation*, yet *this* no more con-

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cerns the *Church* of *England*, than it does any of the *ſeparate Congregations*. Let a Man make his *Choice* of what *Communion* he pleaſes, how *Free* ſoever he was before the *Choice*, he muſt come under ſome *publick Authority* after the *Choice* is made, ſo that notwithſtanding his ſeeming Diſatisfaction at the *Eſtabliſh'd Church*, for overturning her own *ſole Foundation*, yet his *Lordſhip* may be as well affected to *our Church*, as to *any part* of the *Catholic Church*, whilſt it is militant here upon Earth.

But his *Lordſhip* will not ſuffer this Doctrine of a *ſolid Foundation* to be paſſed over without ſome pleaſant Illuſtration, to recommend it, if not to the *Judgment*, at leaſt to the *Fancy* of his Readers. He tells us (*ib.*) " If any Perſons " ſhould recommend the moſt beautiful Houſe in the World " for an Habitation; and extol the Harmony and Symmetry of its outſide, " (I thought *Harmony* had belonged to *Choriſters* and *Singing Birds*, not to *Houſes*) " as well as Fineneſs and Conveniency of the Rooms within? I preſume few " would be moved by all this to chuſe it for their Habitation, without enquiring after the firmneſs of the Ground " under it, and the ſtrength and ſoldity of its Foundation. "

In this I totally agree with his *Lordſhip*, for I had rather Live ſafely in a College, than have my Brains knock'd out by the Fall of a Palace. He adds (*p.* 120.) " and fewer would be " moved to it by the *great Encomiums* beſtowed upon it by " thoſe Perſons, if they ſaw *them themſelves*, all the while, " doing ſomething, which either tended to remove the very " *Ground* from under it, or to weaken the *Foundation*, upon " which the Beauty of the whole relies. " I agree alſo with his *Lordſhip*, that if I ſhould be in an Houſe with Men, whom I ſaw digging up its *Foundation*, I ſhould either think them *great Fools*, in not conſidering that the *Houſe* would fall upon their *own Heads*, or *great Villains* in undermining an *Houſe*, into which they were received as *Friends*, and treated with all immaginable *kindneſs*, and I ſhould not think my ſelf ſafe in ſuch Company, ſince *One* Enemy within, is more dangerous than *Ten* without. But will his *Lordſhip* ſay, that every Man's *private Judgment*, is the moſt *ſolid Foundation* of the *Chriſtian Church*, (or of the *Reformation* which is a part of it,) when it thence would follow, that the *Church* would have as many *different Foundations*, as there are *diverſities* of *private Judgments* in the World? Is the bare *Appearance* of *Truth* which is often the Parent of the moſt notorious Errors, as *ſtrong*, and as *ſolid* a *Foundation* as *Truth* itſelf?

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I know *Foundation* as uſed by the *Biſhop*, is a Metaphorical Expreſſion, and I am no Friend to *Metaphors* and *Allegories* in Controverſy, for tho' they are of excellent uſe in moving the *Affections*, yet they often are too apt to caſt a miſt before the Eyes in *Logical Diſputation*, yet ſince *Foundation* is a *Scriptural Metaphor*; Let us ſee its true meaning in *Holy Scriptures*. Luk. 6. 47. 48. *Whoſoever* (ſaith Chriſt) *cometh to me and heareth my ſayings, and doeth them, I will ſhew you to whom he is like.* He is *like a Man which built an Houſe, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a Rock: and when the Flood aroſe, the ſtream beat vehemently upon that Houſe, and could not ſhake it: for it was Founded upon a Rock.* To *hear*, in ſcriptural Language, is to *underſtand*, with a Purpoſe of *acting*, according to the true Senſe and Meaning of the *Words*. The *Words* of *Chriſt*, are either *Mandates* of *Faith*, or of *Practice*. I would then ask the *Biſhop*, and his *Friends*, whether *he* who underſtands the *Words* of *Chriſt* in a *wrong Senſe*, or *he* that underſtandeth them in a *true Senſe*, is *that* Perſon who *buildeth his Houſe* (*i. e.* his Hopes of a Salvation) *upon a Rock*? If *he* ſays, that *he* who underſtands them in *either*, provided *he* acts according to *that* Underſtanding, *builds* upon a *Rock*. I anſwer, then there is no intrinſick Goodneſs, nor Excellency in the *Words* of *Chriſt*, if underſtood *either way*, they are *equally* conducive to our Juſtification. But St. *Mathew* in a paralel Place (Math. 7. 24, &c.) makes the Difference as great, as between *Wiſdom* and *Folly*, *whoſoever heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doth them, I will liken him unto a Wiſe Man.*——*And every one that heareth theſe ſayings of mine, and doth them not, ſhall be likened unto a Fooliſh Man.*—— But the *Biſhop's* Notion of the *Juſtifying Power* of *private Judgment*, equals *Folly* with *Wiſdom*, even in the Eyes of an Omniſcient Being. St. *Paul* tells us, 1 *Cor.* 3, 10, 11. *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wiſe Maſter-builder I have laid the Foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every Man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other Foundation can no Man lay, than that is laid, which is Jeſus Chriſt.* It could not be the *Perſon* of *Chriſt*, which was *this Foundation*, for *that* could not be at St. *Paul's* Diſpoſal, but the *Doctrines* of the *Chriſtian Religion*, as taught either *Perſonally* by *Chriſt*, or given by the *Inſpiration* of his *Spirit* to St. *Paul* and the *Apoſtles*, which was the *Foundation* of the *Chriſtian Church*; for the *Truth* of *them* remains the ſame for ever, like a Rock. But the *Judgments* of Men are as fluctuating as the Waves of the Sea, and altogether as unfit for a *Foundation*. The ſame *Apoſtle*, Eph. 2. 19. 20. aſſures the

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new Converts at *Epheſus*, that, by leaving *Idolatry*, and adhering to the *Truths* profeſſed in the *Chriſtian Church*, they were *no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow Citizens with the Saints*—— *And are built upon the Foundation of the Apoſtles and Prophets, Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief Corner-ſtone.* This muſt be upon the *immutable Truths* taught Mankind, by the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, and eſpecially by *Chriſt*, the great *Founder* of *Revealed Religion*, and is *that foundation of God which ſtandeth ſure*; (2 Tim. 2. 19.) whereas the *Apoſtle* complains of *falſe Teachers*, that *their Words did eat like a canker* (ver. 17.) and complains of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus* (ver. 18.) that *concerning the truth they had erred, ſaying the reſurrection is paſt already.* The *Church* of *Chriſt* therefore could not be built upon the *falſe Doctrines* of *Hymeneus* and *Philetus*, tho' they might be declarative of the *Sincerity* of their *private Judgments*, becauſe the *Foundation of God ſtandeth ſure*, but the Opinions of Men are alterable, and ſo dis-joined from one another, that the Sentiments of two private Chriſtians, in matters of Religion, are ſeldom in all things exactly the ſame. So that the *Biſhop's Foundation* of the *Right* of *private Judgment*, is more like a *Whir-pool*, or *Quick-ſand*, than a *Rock*, that is capable of giving to the *Church* of *Chriſt* a *ſolid* and *ſtable Foundation*, as our *Saviour* promiſed to *that* Profeſſion of a *True Faith*, which was made by St. *Peter, upon this rock will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell ſhall not prevail againſt it.* Math, 16. 18.

The *Biſhop* (*p.* 121) to take away *all Power* of the *Church* of reſtraining the Extravagancies of *private Judgment*, is pleaſed again to attack her *Excommunicating Power*, with her own Weapons which ſhe uſed herſelf at the *Reformation*. He ſays, " the *Church* of *Rome* had at the Time of the *Re-*
" *formation*, *all Authority* neceſſary to a *Church* of *Chriſt*, ——
" and that we pretending to no more than what we re-
" ceived by *Succeſſion* from *them*, muſt contend that the *Ab-*
" *ſolutions*, *Denunciations*, and *Excommunications*, by thoſe
" of that Church, are as *Authoritative* and of as much
" Effect, as thoſe of *any others*; and ought to be treated in
" the ſame manner. But (ſays he) how did the *firſt Refor-*
" *mers* behave themſelves? Did they not think and ſpeak
" of them, as having nothing to do with the Favour or An-
" ger of God? Did they not treat them as *Humane Engines*,
" as *mere outcries of Humane Terror*, as the *Terrors of Men*,
" and *vain Words*?

I anſwer, no, If by the *firſt Reformers*, he means the *Reformers* of *our own Church*, as he ought to do, ſince it is to

her that in this Place he makes this application. *Our Reformers* never thought that *Excommunication* was an *Humane Engine*, becauſe they own'd it always as an *Apoſtolical Inſtitution*, if not an *expreſs Ordinance* of *Chriſt* himſelf. Whereas *all Humane Engines* are of *Humane Invention*, the Effects of the Ingenuity of ſubtle Men, and not of Perſons inſpired by the *Holy Ghoſt*. They did not call *Excommunication* a *mere outcry of Humane Terror*, or deny with the *Biſhop* that it had *any Effect*, as to the Favour of God, ſo as at all to affect Men's Eternal Salvation, becauſe the *Sentence* did not finally and irreverſibly determine their future State; (ſince they knew that the validity of *all Humane Sentences* on Earth, muſt again be tried, and finally determined at the laſt Day, in the *Court* of *Heaven*) but they humbly and truly conceived, that many things provoke God's Anger, and Affect us, as to his Favour in this World, which yet do not eternally damn us in another. *David*'s Adultery, and St. *Peter*'s Denial of *Chriſt*, did not determine their future State, tho' they did caſt them out of God's Favour for the preſent, and without Repentance, would have had the ſame Effect for ever. They did not contemn the *Thunderbolts* of *Rome*, as a Form of *vain Words*, becauſe they thought that *Chriſt* had left *no Excommunicating Power* to his *Church*, but becauſe St. *Paul* had told them, that it was *the Power of the Lord given him to edification, and not to deſtruction.* 2 *Cor.* 13. 10. And as the *Edification* of a *Chriſtian* does conſiſt in the *Improvement* of the *Knowledge* of the *Truth*, and a *Practice* conformable to *that Knowledge*; (for *Knowledge* [alone] *puffeth up, but Charity edifieth*) *Excommunication* could have no Effect on thoſe who were cenſured for the Profeſſion of the true Religon. For the *Apoſtle* confeſſed that neither he, nor the whole Apoſtolical College, had any Authority to do any thing to the prejudice of *Truth*, (ver. 8.) Laſtly, *our Reformers* never taught that the *Sentence* of *Excommunication* had no Spiritual Effect upon immoral Offenders, as the *Biſhop* does ſay; that the *Inceſtuous Corinthian*, notwithſtanding St. *Paul*'s Excommunication, was nevertheleſs in the Favour of God, and that if he had died impenitent under *that heavy Sentence*, he would have been never the worſe, nor the better, in the Eyes of God. If they had ſo thought, they would never have retained a *Scare-Crow* in the *Church*, which could frighten none but *Children* and *Fools*, from bringing the moſt *Immoral* of *all Scandalls* upon the *Chriſtian Religion*. But as they eſteemed it a *proper Medium*, of preſerving *Truth*, and preventing *Error*, only *ineffectual* when pronounced againſt

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the *Innocent*, and always *formidable* to the *Guilty*, they took away the *Abuſe*, and retained the *Uſe* of it in *our Church*. And none, but ſome ſcurrilous *Enthuſiaſts*, did ever call an *Antient Eccleſiaſtical Rite*, a *mere Humane Engine*, an *outcry of Humane Terror*, a *Terror of Men*, and a *Form* of *vain Words*.

Neither can I ſee any Reaſon why the *Biſhop* ſhould with ſo much vehemence depreſs the uſe of *Excommunication*, when he knows that the Exerciſe of it in our Kingdom againſt *Proteſtant Diſſenters* is intirely ſuſpended, and the ſeverity of *all Penal Laws* ſo much abated, that as *that* Reverend Member of the *Committee*, the *Dean* of *Chicheſter* has well demonſtated, there are none but *defenſive Weapons* left to our *Eccleſiaſtical Conſtitution*; and to take away *them* from Perſons who have heard of their *Forefathers*, is the heigth of all imaginable Cruelty. But if the Rules of *Humane Policy* did require, in the Opinion of ſo *great a States-man*, the utter ablation of *thoſe defenſive Weapons*, and even the Deſtruction of *all Authority* in the *Eſtabliſh'd Church*; yet I could wiſh that his *Lordſhip* would remember that he is a *Chriſtian Biſhop*, as well as a Partaker of the *Legiſlative Authority*, and therefore we of the *Inferior Clergy* expected that he ſhould not have produced Arguments out of our *Bibles*, for, or againſt *that* which ſolely belongs to the flouriſhing Condition of the *Civil State*, unleſs thoſe Arguments had been ſo plainly contained therein, that they might have been apparent to the Underſtandings of all unbyaſſed Chriſtians.

(P. 122.) His *Lordſhip* in Anſwer to a demand of the *Commitee*, How he could anſwer the Promiſe made at his Conſecration, *to be ready with all faithful Diligence to baniſh and drive away all Erroneous and Strange Doctrines, contrary to God's Word?* Thinks it a ſufficient Anſwer to ſay, (*p.* 124.) "That he knows of no Way becoming a *Chriſtian* "*Biſhop* —— to drive away all Erroneous Doctrines—— "than to call upon, and encourage all Chriſtians to have "recourſe to that Word of God, and to judge from *that* "alone, what Doctrines are contrary to it."

This is very true. But then there is no more effectual Way to encourage *all Falſe* and *Strange Doctrines*, than by telling Men, that *theſe falſe* and *erroneous Doctrines* will juſtify them before *God*, provided they *ſincerely believe*, and *their Conſcience is fully perſuaded*, that they are agreeable to the *Word* of *God*. This is not ſending them to *God's Word*, but to *their own Fancies*, to be by *them* determined in *all matters* of *Faith*, and making *Conſcience*, tho' mis-guided and miſtaken, the *ſupreme Judge* of *Controverſy*, whereas, in reality, it is no more

than the Knowledge of the neceſſity of our ſubjection to a ſuperior Being.

The *Biſhop* thinks it a Juſtification of his conveying Holy Orders to others, to ſay, " that he does, (*ib.*) according to " the Cuſtom and Law of the Realm, as well as according " to the deſign of the Goſpel, give thoſe others a Right " publickly to Preach the Goſpel —— But that he can con- " vey to them, no Authority OVER the Conſciences of " others, no Authority to OBLIGE others to receive any " thing, which thoſe others think diſagreeable to the *Goſ-* " *pel* of *Chriſt*.

I anſwer, if the *Biſhop Ordains* only in compliance to the *Cuſtom* and *Law* of the *Realm*, he acts not as a *Miniſter* of *Chriſt*, but as a *Miniſter* of the *State*; and then not *Chriſt*, but the *State* is obliged to pay him his Reward for it. But then, let his *Lordſhip* conſider, that there muſt be ſome *Authority* in the *State*, to give him the *Power* of granting *Licences* to others to Preach the *Goſpel*, or elſe every Man would have *equal Authority* to Preach it, without a *Licence* from the *Biſhop*; and then all his Doctrine of *Chriſt's* being *ſole Legiſlator in his own Kingdom* (as he calls Chriſt's Church upon Earth) falls to the Ground, and comes to nothing. And, if he ſays, that he *Ordains* according to the *Deſign* of the *Goſpel*, he muſt alſo ſay that the *deſign* of the *Goſpel* was to have all Miniſters inſtructed at their Ordination, that *they* have an *Authority* to Preach the *Goſpel*, but that *every one* of *their Hearers* has an *Authority* of *Conſcience*, even when *they* Preach the moſt *Fundamental Truths* of it, not to believe one Word they ſay, if they think it *diſagreeable* to the *Doctrine* of *Chriſt*, tho' it is really *agreeable* to it. This is giving the Power of Juſtification to an *Erroneous Conſcience*, which is due to a *Conſcience inſtructed*, in the *ſaving Knowledge* of the *Truth*; and it is giving a Man *Liberty* to tranſgreſs *all the Laws* of *Chriſt*, which are not agreeable to *his own Sentiments*, without the leaſt Danger of being puniſh'd for it; for ſince therein he obeys his *Conſcience*, it is no ſufficient Cauſe of Condemnation that his *Conſcience* dictates to him things which God has forbidden. The *Biſhop* can't be ignorant of the *Miſchiefs* an *erroneous Conſcience* has done in the World; how it condemned *Chriſt*, murthered his *Apoſtles*, worſhiped *Idols*, ſlew the *Prophets* of the *Living God*, and promoted the *Prieſts* of *Baal* to *Honours* and *Preferments*, ſubverted the *Beſt* of *Civil Governments*, brought forth *Schiſm*, encouraged *Superſtition*, and gave the ſame *Honours* to *Enthuſiaſm*, which are due to nothing leſs than *Divine Inſpiration*.

It is in vain for the *Biſhop* to boaſt (p. 125.) " that herein " he governs all his Conduct, and all his exerciſe of any " Powers veſted in him, by that ſacred Rule, by which the " *Apoſtles* acted, *of not preaching themſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.*" For *they* preach *Chriſt*, who preach the neceſſity of believing *all* the *Truths* which *Chriſt* taught, whilſt he was upon Earth, or afterward inſpired into his *Apoſtles*. Not *they* who give every Man's *Conſcience* a full *Licence* and *Authority* to indemnify its *owner* from any *penalty* for *ſtrange* and *erroneous Doctrines*. *Thoſe* are the faithful *Miniſters* of *Chriſt* their *Lord*, who tell their *People*, they come to them, not with a *Licence* from the *State*, to indemnify them from *Civil Penalties*, but in the Name of the *Bleſſed Jeſus*, to declare ſuch *Truths* to them, as they are bound to believe after they are ſufficiently declared, and that a *darkned Conſcience* in the midſt of ſo much *Light*, can neither juſtify nor excuſe them.

They preach *themſelves*, and not *Jeſus Chriſt* to the *People*, who advance a Principle of the *Rights* of *private Judgment* to chooſe what *Faith* they pleaſe, (whether *Gnoſtick*, *Arian*, or *Socinian*) when *Chriſt* left (if we may believe St. *Paul*) but *one Faith* and *one Baptiſm* to his *Church*.

The *Biſhop* ſays (*ib.*) that his Method (*viz.* of leaving every Man to the free uſe of *private Judgment*, as *that*, which *true*, or *falſe* will juſtify him at the laſt Day) " will more ef- " fectually *baniſh and drive away all erroneous Doctrines*, &c. " then if he ſhould aſſume to himſelf a Power of throwing " thoſe out of God's Favour, who teach what his *Lordſhip* ſo " accounts."

I anſwer, If his *Lordſhip* is ſo very doubtful of *every Article* of the *Chriſtian Faith*, that he dares not puniſh *any* of his *Clergy*, who, according to his *Conſcience*, ſhould oppoſe them, I know not how he can do ſo much as *preach* the *Word* of *God with Boldneſs*, which yet is the Duty of every pious *Miniſter* of the *bleſſed Jeſus*. But if his *Lordſhip* will take the Advice he gives to others, and have recourſe to the *Word* of *God* for ſolving this Difficulty, he will find, *Rev.* 2. 14. that the *Angel* or *Biſhop* of the *Church* of *Pergamos*, was blamed by our *Saviour* becauſe that *he* had in *his Church thoſe that held the Doctrine of Balaam* (whatever that Doctrine was) *who taught* Balac *to caſt a ſtumbling-block before the Children of* Iſrael, &c. as alſo who *held* (ver. 15.) *the Doctrine of the* Nicolaitans, which thing was odious to *Chriſt*, notwithſtanding they might pretend as much *Sincerity* as the *Orthodox Chriſtians*. And the like is ſaid of the *Biſhop* of *Thyatira*. Now theſe *Biſhops* could not have been juſtly blamed by *Chriſt*, for ſuffering theſe

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Heretical Teachers to remain in their reſpective *Churches*, if it had not been in *their Power* to throw them out. He ſays, "all other Methods but his own, had *baniſhed and driven away* "almoſt all Truth, and all Chriſtianity for many hundred "Years before Chriſtianity."—— I ſay that it is highly probable that *Church Authority* did not introduce thoſe *Superſtitious Errors*, which are now the diſtinguiſhing Marks of the *Popiſh Religion*, but that the firſt Original was owing to the *Stupidity* of the *unlearned Laity*, affecting *Beads*, and *Pictures*, and *Exorciſms* and *purifying Luſtrations*, &c. in which they were too much indulged by a *complying Clergy*. This may appear a new Notion to his *Lordſhip*, but if there was room for a Digreſſion, I could ſhew it to be more than highly probable. But to conclude this Topick, If the *Biſhop* of *Bangor*, whilſt he moves in the higheſt *Orb* of *Eccleſiaſtical Order*, can acknowledge that he has *no Authority* OVER the *Conſciences* of *Others* (*i. e.* no Man is in Conſcience bound to obey him,) then there can be no Other Perſon, who can have *Spiritual Authority* greater than himſelf, becauſe none is in an higher Order, and conſequently *Chriſt* hath left his *Church* in a State of *Anarchy* and *Confuſion*.

I come now to the SECOND BRANCH of the CHARGE of the COMMITTEE, *viz.* "That the "*Doctrines* of his *Sermon* did impeach the *regal Supremacy*, and "the *Authority* of the *Legiſlature*." It is a Subject in which I am unwilling to engage, but the true *Deſign* of the *Biſhop's Sermon* can't be underſtood, without ſaying ſomething briefly of it.

I muſt do the *Biſhop* that Juſtice to declare, that I believe he had no Deſign to do any thing to the Prejudice of his *Majeſties Government*, either in the *Preſervative*, or his *Sermon*. In the *Preſervative*, he pleads ſtrongly for the *Authority* of *Lay-Depoſitions*, one of the higheſt Acts of *Juriſdiction* in *Eccleſiaſtical Affairs*; and the *Sermon*; was plainly deſigned, for ſuch a *Political Union* of his *Majeſties Subjects* of *all Perſuaſions*, as his *Lordſhip* thought would be moſt conducive to the *flouriſhing State* of the *Nation*, and *Preſervation* of the *preſent Government*. I ſhould not have ventured to have ſaid that the *Doctrines* of it were levelled againſt the *Corporation* and *Teſt Acts* of *Parliament*, if his *Lordſhip's* Anſwer to Dr. *Snape* had not juſtified ſo ſtrange a Charge. For when Dr. *Snape* had urged againſt him *thoſe Acts* of *Parliament*, which his *Doctrines* ſeemed to overthrow. He replies, (*Anſw. to Dr. Snape*, p. 33.) "for one Chriſtian

Divine

" Divine, whilſt he is endeavouring to preach Religion, " and the Goſpel, to be told by another Chriſtian Divine, " that he contradicts *Acts* of *Parliament*, and Laws made " by Men, would have a very odd appearance, if any thing " could be calmly conſidered." And (*ib.* p. 34.) he vilifies his Adverſary, as a Perſon deſirous to make *Religion* a *Civil Teſt*, and for debaſing the moſt *ſacred Things* in the World, into a *political Tool* and *Engine* of *State*. He ſays, (*ib.* p. 43.) that " the *Papiſts* are not excluded on the account of *mere Reli-* " *gion*, but ſolely on the account of their avowing ſuch *Prin-* " *ciples* as naturally and unavoidably deſtroy the State." And leſt any one ſhould think he was afraid to ſpeak againſt any *Statute Law* now in Being, he adds. " It is acknowledged " by the moſt zealous Church-Men, that a *Teſt*, founded " upon their *Popiſh Principles*, conſidered as *Political*, might " be found out, which might be a truer ſecurity to the *Eſta-* " *bliſhed Church* it ſelf, than the *Preſent*, and more agreeable " to Chriſtianity and Humanity than the other." All which he crowns with this *Chriſtian Maxim*, for which the *Non-jurors* owe him ten thouſand millions of Thanks, *viz.* " That no " Men ought to ſuffer in their common Rights, for any mere " Difference of Opinion in Religion, conſidered as ſuch." So that whether the *King* and *Parliament* do meddle with the *Church*, in depoſing her *Biſhops*, or whether, in compliance with the *Doctrines* of the *Sermon*, they abſtain from all manner of intermedling with *Chriſt's Kingdom*, ſtill when *Reaſons* of *State* require it, the *Biſhop* will be in the Intereſt of *King* and *Parliament*. But then when his *Lordſhip* is thus zealouſly promoting the *temporal Intereſts* of the *Nation*, like a *States-man* of the *firſt Magnitude*, and removing *all thoſe Acts* of *Parliament* which obſtruct its *Trade*, or hinders the *Progreſs* of its *Arms*, or weakens the *publick Safety*, or *abridges* the *Privilges* of the *People*, or the *Prerogative* of the *Monarch*, I could wiſh his *Lordſhip* would make his *Admirable Harangues*, rather in the *Senate Houſe* than in the *Pulpit*, and draw his Arguments *pro* or *con*, rather from *Tacitus*, *Matchiavil*, *Bocaline*, or ſome other *Maſter* of *humane Policy*, than out of the *New Teſtament*; both becauſe our *Saviour's Kingdom is not of this World*, or if it was *of this World*, it never was governed by *ſuch Principles*, as his *Lordſhip* zealouſly advances.

The *grand Project* of ſome *great Men*, to diſpence equally the *Favours* of the *Government* to *Chriſtians* of *all Perſuaſions*, and thereby uniting the *Affections* of *all* the *Religioniſts* in the *Nation*, into *one Intereſt* for the *Preſervation* of the *Government*, is capable of receiving *great Embeliſhments* from his *Lordſhip's*

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inimitable Eloquence; and his *endeavours* to advance the *glorious Deſign*, recommends him to the *higheſt Poſts* in the *Nation*, when made in their *proper Place*. But when Men ſee a Perſon of his *Lordſhip's* Eminence, take Poſſeſſion of a *Pulpit*, they expect to hear ſome particular Directions to find the *Way* to the *Kingdom* of *Heaven*, and not to be told, that go which *Way* ſoever they thought *Beſt*, they ſhould be ſure to come thither at laſt, provided, they did *ſincerely* deſire it, as all, but Mad-men, are ſure to do. They will not very eaſily believe, that a *falſe Religion* will ſave their Souls, as well as a *true one*; or that it is neceſſary to *eternal Salvation*, to aboliſh *all thoſe Acts* of *Parliament*, which are made in Favour of *that Religion*, which they eſteemed the *Beſt* of all others.

It is true, that the *Royal Supremacy*, the *Uniformity*, *Teſt*, *Corporation*, and *Schiſm Acts*, do ſtand in the Way to obſtruct the *Political Union* ſo much deſired, and ſo little underſtood; nor is it for Men in a *private* Station, eſpecially *Miniſters* of *him*, whoſe *Kingdom is not of this World*, to cenſure a *grave Prelate*, well inured in *Affairs* of *State*, for endeavouring, in a *Parliamentary* Way, to promote the *Abrogation* of *thoſe Laws* which obſtruct the *grand Deſign*. But to atttempt to prove *thoſe Laws* to be contrary to the *Law* of *God*, to propoſe the *Abrogation* of them from the *Pulpit*, as if it was a *Condition* of *eternal Salvation*, to repreſent their *Abrogation* as a *neceſſary Part* of our *Duty*, and *Eſſential* to the *Chriſtian Religon*, to invite Men of *all Perſuaſions* to join their *Intereſts* to ſubvert *them*, with an *aſſurance* of *Salvation*, in *any Church*, or *any Communion*, which they ſhall chooſe, and to deny the acknowledgment of a *Supremacy*, whilſt his own *Subſcription* to it was almoſt wet upon the Paper, and all this done in a *Sermon*, (and his *Comments* on it,) whoſe *Text* ſpeaks of nothing but the *State* of *Chriſt's Kingdom* in *another World*, is *that* which ſtrook the *Lower Houſe* of *Convocation* with little leſs than *Horror* and *Amazement*. If *theſe Acts* had been *Cruel* or *Oppreſſive*, made to ſupport *Superſtition*, or *Idolatry*, all good Men would have given ſuch attention to his *Lordſhip*, as is due to ſo eminent a *States-man*, and ſo great a *Divine*. But as the Reverend the *Dean* of *Chicheſter* has abundantly ſatisfied the World, of their *unſpotted Innocence*, I will ſay no more upon an exhauſted Subject, but that I hope my *Lord* of *Bangor* will let them live in quiet, till he can find *one Text* of *Scripture* which can juſtify their Condemnation.

But inſtead of this, the *Biſhop* has recourſe to the unlawfulneſs of adding *new Sanctions* to *Chriſt's Laws*, and of *Reigning*

ing in his Kingdom, things impoſſible to be done, becauſe *Chriſt's proper Kingdom* is in *Heaven*; his *Church* upon *Earth* is but a *Porch*, or *outward Court* of his *everlaſting Kingdom*, and *Princes*, and *Biſhops* may rule and govern there, without any prejudice to *Chriſt's real and proper Kingdom*. To be free from *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical Government*, is the *privilege* of the *Saints* in *Chriſt's proper Kingdom*, not of *thoſe* who ſtand in the *outward Court*, and perhaps may never go any farther. The *Biſhop* knows well, that *thoſe* who ſtand in this *Porch*, or *outward Court*, after *Chriſt's Aſcention*, were never called, even *Figuratively*, *Chriſt's Kingdom*, but his *Church*; and therefore no greater Fallacy was ever offered to the underſtandings of Men, than to apply the Word *Kingdom*, to *thoſe* to whom *Chriſt* and his *Apoſtles* never applied it, and thence deprive the *Church* of *Chriſt* of the *Protection* of *good Laws*, a *ſettled Maintenance* of the *Miniſtry*, *all proper means* of driving away *Hereſy* and *Schiſm*, excepting *that* of *Appeals* to *private Judgment*, from the *Authority*, I will not ſay of *National*, or *General Councils*, but even of the *Holy Scriptures*, and of *God himſelf*. It would move the Spleen of an *Arch-Angel* in the heigth of his *Hallelujahs*, to hear the *Church* rob'd of her *Legal Securities*, under pretence of giving *her* a *Kingdom*, which *Chriſt* never gave *her* in this World, but reſerved for ſome few of *her* ſelect Members, as a Reward in the World hereafter. And it would move the Pity of a *Sicilian Tyrant*, to obſerve *Kings* and *Parliaments* frightned from the *Prerogatives*, by their reſpective Conſtitution, due to them, of exerciſing the *Civil Sword* againſt the *Servants of Satan*, becauſe they call themſelves the *Subjects* of *Chriſt's Kingdom*; as if *he* who ſubmitted *himſelf*, when alive, to all *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical Authority*, ſhould, after his Death, exempt his *Diſciples* from *both*, nay deprive them of the common protection of Subjects by *Civil Laws*, becauſe they were *Candidates* of his *Heavenly Kingdom*. This is falling down, and worſhiping a *mere Figure* in *Rhetoric*, and yielding up their *Crowns* and *Scepters* to a *new Created Phantom*, which neither they, nor their Fathers knew.

The Reader therefore muſt not expect that I ſhould fight longer againſt a *Fayry Kingdom*, erected by a *ſingle Biſhop*, but declare to the World, that the *Church* of *Chriſt* is a *Society* of *Men*, capable of receiving and enjoying the ſame *Privileges* with *other Societies*, and ſubject to the ſame *Authority* of *Kings* and *Princes*, as *other Societies* are in their reſpective *Dominions*; That *all Chriſtian Legiſlators* are bound, as *Subjects* of the ſame *Maſter*, to defend *her* againſt the open Violence of *thoſe* who would deſtroy *her*, and not be frightned from giving *her* Protection, by the empty Sound of *Acting* as *Kings* in *Chriſt's Dominions*.

I can't without a ſmile obſerve, how ſubmiſſively the *Biſhop* behaves himſelf, when the *Committee* charge him with ſpeaking

againſt the *Royal Supremacy*. He ſays, (p. 128.) " It was an " involuntary and undeſigned Injury " and (p. 129.) that " he " muſt confeſs he is not exactly skilled in the Extent and Bounds " of the *Royal Supremacy*;" (yet he ſwore to them very heartily) " yet he confeſſes tis ſomething neceſſary for the ſupport of the " *King* himſelf in his *Civil Prerogatives*, and for the Defence of " his Subjects in their *Civil Rights*," eſpecially againſt the encroachments of *Eccleſiaſtical Powers*; But then his *Lordſhip* did not ſee, that if the *King* might exerciſe *any Authority* in *Chriſt's Kingdom*, the *Acts* of *Parliament* for the *Defence* of the *Church* (he would overthrow) might lawfully be executed therein alſo, and then what becomes of all this Noiſe of *Chriſt's Kingdom?*

One Thing more he obſerves of the *Supremacy* (*ib.*) is, " That " *preaching the Word of God* is diſclaimed by our *Kings* and " *Queens*." I think it is improper to ſay they *diſclaim'd* it, becauſe I believe no Man ever preſumed to ask them to perform *that Office*. But his *Lordſhip's* Obſervation is ſingular, *viz.* " that " in it is implied, that they have have not Authority, (as Temporal Princes) to interpret the *Goſpel*; or to order the Miniſters of the *Goſpel*, what they ſhall receive as the Will of " Chriſt." I anſwer, no more had the *Apoſtles*, according to *his own Doctrine*, nor the *Biſhop* himſelf, to order Miniſters to Preach what their Conſcience forbids them. And as for his Inference, that becauſe *they* do not *preach themſelves*, therefore *they* are not to order the *Miniſters* of the *Goſpel*, it is juſt as good an Inference, as to ſay, I muſt not bid my Dog bark, becauſe I do not know how to bark my ſelf.

He again, p. 130. would reconcile the *Supremacy* to his Notion of not adding *new Sanctions* to the *Laws* of *Chriſt's Kingdom*. But the attempt is ridiculous. For if the *Supremacy* and *Parliamentary Powers* are both *Civil*, both are alike contrary to *Chriſt's ſole Authority* of making *Sanctions* in *his own Kingdom*. Both muſt ſtand, or fall together. But he knew too well the Penalty of a *Præmunire*, and therefore treats the *Supremacy* with a great deal of tenderneſs. But as for *Parliamentary Authority* in Matters of Religion, he wonders any *Divine* ſhould urge it againſt him, and ſays, if *Acts* of *Parliament* are contrary to the Truth he teaches he cannot help it, that is, in plainer Terms, he does not care whether they are, or no.

He ſays (p. 130.) " The *Royal Supremacy* does not imply a " right to add to the Sanctions of Chriſt's Laws." As if the *Royal Supremacy* did not imply a Right, or Power, to Reward, or Puniſh any of Chriſt's Servants, which all muſt know to be entirely falſe; for tho' it may be *within the Bonds of the Legiſlative Authority* (to ſpeak in his own unintelligible Language) yet that very *Legiſlative Authority* does Puniſh and Reward, in his Senſe, many

of Christ's Servants, else why does he so openly inveigh against the *Test* and *Corporation Acts*?

He says (p. 131.) "That whoever annexes, or adds *Sanctions*, "(to Christ's Laws) is *so far King*." And yet he says in the same Page, "that this *Passage* does not so much as affirm, that "any Men upon Earth have no such Right." But I say then that these Passages, and all he has said on this Head imply, that there is no harm in Reigning as *Kings*, and thereby making *Christ's Kingdom* their own, so that all he would infer from hence against *Parliamentary Authority*, is vanished into nothing.

He desires (*ib.*) "that if any think fit to oppose this directly "——*They* would as plainly maintain the *Propositions* contradi-"ctory to these, as he has plainly laid them down."——As I have been always ready (and perhaps too Officious) to gratify any reasonable requests of his *Lordship*, I will gratify him in *this*, by laying down the following Propositions.

1. That God has so framed our *Natures*, that *our Bodies*, and all that belongs to *them*, must necessarily be at the Disposal of *that Society* in which we live. This is not so much a *moral* as a *natural Necessity*, let the *Form* of *Government* be whatever his *Lordship* will be pleased to imagine. This is the *Magistrates proper Kingdom*.

2. God has framed our Natures so, that the *Happiness* of the *Soul* in a *future State* must needs be at his own Disposal. The *sole Power* of which he has committed to *his Son*. And this is *Christ's Kingdom*, wherein he reigns with his *Saints*, and his *Saints* with *him* for ever.

3. That whilst we live in the *Flesh*, we are in *Christ's Church*, not in his *proper Kingdom*; and that *Christ* and his *Apostles*, after his *Ascension* into *Heaven*, always called the *Body* of the *Faithful*, by the name of *Christ's Church*, (Ἐκκλησία) signifying a *Body* of *Men*, called out of the *best* of the World, to be *Candidates* of the *Kingdom* of *Heaven*. To call it his *Kingdom*, is a piece of *Sophistry* to deprive the *Magistracy* of its *Legal Powers*.

4 That whilst this *Body* of *Men* are in the *Flesh*, they must receive the Condition of living well, or ill, from the *Magistracy*, but their Conditions of living happily hereafter, from *Christ* alone, or from *those* who are *commissioned* by him, so far as their *Commission* is extended.

5. That the *Church* being a *Society* founded upon *Divine Revelation*, it can demand no *Privileges*, but what appear by *Divine Revelation* to be conferred on it, by *Christ*, who was her *first Founder*. Let the *Bishop* produce *one Text* of *Scripture*, wherein *Christ* forbids *Magistrates* to dispose of the *Temporal Concerns* of his *Disciples* and *Servants*, and then we will grant that some *Acts* of *Parliament* are contrary to *God's Word*, and we will resign our

Intereſt in *them*. But if *Chriſt* exempted not *his own Perſon* from the *Power* of the *Civil Magiſtrate*, but ſubmitted *even to the death of the Croſs*, we dare not ſay with the *Biſhop*, that therein he acted (I write it with a trembling Hand) more like a *Slave*, than like a *Subject*, whereas St. *Peter* thought, he *left us* therein *an Example, that we ſhould follow his Steps*.

6. That the *higheſt* of *all Magiſtrates* being but the *Servants* of *God*, their Salvation depends upon their making their *Laws*, not deſtructive to the *Laws* of *Chriſt*, nor the Prejudice of his *Church on Earth*. Nay they are obliged to uſe the utmoſt of their *Powers* to ſupport the *true Religion*, and give its Profeſſor of it all due Encouragement. The *Biſhop* himſelf may be put in Mind, that *he* is under the ſame obligation, whilſt *he* is in *our Communion*, for thereby (whatever he may ſay to the contrary) he declares to *God* and *Man*, that he thinks it the *pureſt Communion* now extant. *Do good to all Men, eſpecially to thoſe who are of the houſhold of Faith*.

7. That *Chriſt* having laid *no Reſtraint* upon the *Magiſtracy* of diſpoſing of all *Temporals* at their Diſcretion, they cannot offend as *Uſurpers* of his *Kingdom* by the Diſpenſation of *Temporal Rewards* and *Puniſhments*, which is their *proper-Office*. To ſay they are *ſo far Kings* as they add *new Sanctions* to *Chriſt's Laws*, implies they act no farther as *Kings* than they ought to act. For *Chriſt's Laws* commanding every thing that is good, and forbidding every thing that is evil, they only do their Duty, as *Vice-gerents* of *God*, when they encourage the one, and puniſh the other.

But the *Biſhop* thinks it a ſufficient prevention of this Objection to ſay, (p. 132.) that *Chriſt* made no *Temporals* the *Sanctions* of his Laws.—— "not the Offices or Glories of the State, "not Pains and Impriſonments,—— No not the much leſſer "negative Diſcouragements that belong to humane Society. "He was far from thinking that theſe could be the Inſtruments "of ſuch a Perſuaſion as he thought acceptable to God." And here the *Biſhop* ſeems to triumph "he confeſſes himſelf at a "loſs what to ſay to *Chriſtians* and *Divines*. This *Matter* of *Fact* "is ſo plain and evident. Did (ſays he, p. 133.) our Saviour "himſelf ever propoſe to his Followers, ——the Rewards of "this World? Or, threaten Fines and Impriſonments —— or "even any incapacity of the common Rights of humane So-"ciety?"

I anſwer, no, he did not, but the Reaſon was, becauſe he never acted as a *Civil Magiſtrate*, but does it thence follow, that it was his Will that no Man after him ought to do it? did his refuſal of a *Crown*, when offered him by the *People*, quite aboliſh the *regal Office*, or excuſe *Kings* from their indiſpenſable Duty, to employ their utmoſt Powers for the Encouragement of the

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true Religion? He ſays (p. 134.) "Chriſt did not command the "*Magiſtrates* to do it, whenever they ſhould become *Chriſtians*." No more did he command them to wear a *Crown*, or receive *Taxes*. Muſt they therefore do neither, without firſt obtaining Licence from the Biſhop?

Two ſufficient Reaſons may be aſſigned why *Chriſt* gave no particular Commands to *Magiſtrates*, how to behave Themſelves in the Advancement of his Honour and Glory. The One, becauſe there was then no *Chriſtian Magiſtracy* extant. The Other, becauſe whenever the *Magiſtrate* ſhould become *Chriſtian*, he would come under the ſame Obligation, as a *Subject* of *Chriſt*, to do all Things in his Power, towards the Advancement of the true Intereſts of *Chriſt's Religion*. As for the *Biſhop*'s Preſumption, that if *Chriſt* had thought that Worldly Goods, or Evils, had been proper Inſtruments of Perſuaſion, *he* would, once at leaſt, have propoſed Them; a better Reaſon may be given than that ſuggeſted by his *Lordſhip*: viz. that when *Chriſt* had aſſured his *Diſciples* of an Eternity of Rewards and Puniſhments, there was no need of giving Inſtructions to *Magiſtrates*, how they ſhould beſtow the Rewards and Puniſhments in their Power, but of giving Directions to his *Diſciples* not to be byaſſed by them in *Matters* of *Faith*, or *Exerciſe* of their moſt *Holy Religion*, ſo as to deny any one *Article* of *Faith*, or omit the *Practice* of one *Chriſtian Duty*. Our *Saviour* armed his *Diſciples* againſt all poſſible Puniſhments in the *Magiſtrate's* Power, by that one Command, Mat. 10. 28. *Fear not them which kill the Body, but are not able to kill the Soul, but rather fear him which is able to deſtroy both Body and Soul in Hell.* And againſt all the Force of Temptation in Temporal Glories and Honours, by that Reſtraint he lays upon his Diſciples, Matt. 6. 19, 20. *Lay not up for your ſelves treaſures upon Earth, where Moth and Ruſt doth Corrupt, and where Thieves break through and Steal. But lay up for your ſelves treaſures in Heaven, where neither Moth nor Ruſt doth Corrupt, and where Thieves do not break thro' nor Steal.* And theſe Maxims of *Chriſt's* Government were well underſtood by St. *Paul*, when he adviſed *all Chriſtians*, Col. 3. 2. To *ſet their Affection on things above, not on things on the earth*, and declared, that he *eſteemed all the ſufferings of this Life but as dung and droſs, in compariſon of the Glory which ſhould be revealed in him.* Rom. 8. 18. compared with Phil. 3. 8. Let all Chriſtians obſerve theſe two Directions, and they need not abridge the *Magiſtrates* Power of diſpenſing his Temporal Rewards and Puniſhments; for they can have no Effect upon Minds fortified by theſe two truly *Evangelical Precepts*. Nor need they be afraid, (as the *Biſhop* ſeems to be p. 183.) that "the Pro-"claiming and Affixing before-hand, ſuch or ſuch *Temporal Ad-"vantages* to *Religon*, ſhould tend to make Men *Hypocrites*——or

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" furniſh out a Number of Men [fit for Offices in the State]
" cloathed with an Outſide to deceive and impoſe upon Thoſe
" who are to chuſe. " For take away theſe Proclamations, or enlarge them, as you pleaſe, the *Good Chriſtian* will ſtill believe, and do the ſame Thing, as being bound by a *Law* of *Chriſt*, which admits of no Earthly Conſiderations. But the *Hypocrite* who is always byaſſed by Temporal Conſiderations, will deceive, and do wicked Things, as much (if not more) in the *Biſhop's State* of *Liberty*, as in that of a *Legal Reſtriction*. For his Exemption from all *Civil* and *Eccleſiaſtical Cenſures*, by the *Biſhop's Doctrine* of *Sincerity* (Pretences which to *Hypocrites* never are wanting) will encourage him to make what Havock he pleaſes in *Chriſt's Flock*, (like a Wolf in Sheeps Cloathing) under a Pretence of being a *Chriſtian*, when perhaps, he is inwardly a bitter Enemy to all *Revealed Religion*.

I muſt and will therefore blame the Conduct of the *Biſhop*, in abridging the *Authority* of the *Magiſtracy*, when himſelf acknowledges that Chriſt gave no particular Commands to *Them*, but ſuch as are in common to *Them* with his *Other Subjects*, by which *All* who are in the *Legiſlature* (even Thoſe who have only a Vote for a Parliament Member) are equally obliged (as far as in them lieth) to *do good unto all Men, eſpecially unto them who are of the houſe-hold of Faith*. And ſince all Things that belong to the Body, are in the Power of the *Magiſtracy*, let the Form of Government be what it will, they cannot anſwer the Truſt repoſed in them, unleſs they provide a *ſufficient Maintenance* for the *Miniſtry* of *that Religion*, which ſeems to them to be *Beſt*, and give it the *Protection* of *Legal Sanctions*, againſt thoſe who would overthrow it. For whether the *Glories* of this *World* (as the Biſhop calls a little Portion of Meat and Drink for the *Inferior Clergy*, and Great Abundance of it for *Thoſe*, who like *Him*, have *Great Preferments*) are *proper Motives* to *True Religion*, or no, the Fault is not in the *Magiſtrate* who gives them, as *he* thinks *himſelf* in Duty bound to God, but it is the *Receiver* who perverts *thoſe Gifts*, if he is thereby at all byaſſed in the *Choice* of his *Communion*, or in his *Motives* to *Obedience*, which ought to be of a Spiritual Nature. It is a mere Impoſition upon the *Magiſtrate* to ſay, he muſt add no *new Sanctions* to *Chriſt's Laws*, by encouraging *One Communion* more than *Another*, when 'tis plain the Encouragements are properly his own, and given to him by God for that very End, that he ſhould uſe them ſo, as may moſt tend to the Advancement of *that Religion* which he thinks to be *Trueſt* and *Beſt*. And if he be miſtaken therein, he has the ſame Title for Pardon, which other *Chriſtians* have for *involuntary Errors*. And if he is not miſtaken he has the Privilege which every private *Chriſtian* hath, viz. of *making to himſelf friends of the Mammon of unrighteouſneſs*, that

when they fail, they may receive him into Everlasting Habitations. But it is not fair to tell him, that he must not make *new Sanctions* for *Christ's Laws*, when all he can give, or do to his *Subjects* will scarce deserve the Name of a *Sanction*, if compared with the *Eternity* of *Rewards* and *Punishments* which *Christ* has declared to his *Disciples*, as the highest *Sanctions* of *his Laws*.

Now let the *Bishop* come out of his dark Recesses, and tell the *Magistrate* plainly, that he must not give any Encouragement to the *Professors* of a *True Religion*, or *That* which he thinks to be *Truest*, lest it should tempt Men to *Hypocrisy*; and then it will as plainly appear to the World, 1. That he denies the *Magistrate* the same *Liberty* of being *Judge* for *himself*, which he gives to *Every Subject*. 2. That *Sincerity* will not justify the *Magistracy*, tho' it has *that Effect* on *Other Persons*. 3. That the *Magistracy* is not *Master* of its own *Revenues*, tho' *Subjects* have an *Absolute* and *Intire Property* over all that *they* possess. 4. That tho' *Christ* gave no *Commands* to *Magistrates*, not to add *new Sanctions* to *his Laws*, (a Phrase of Speech unknown to *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and I believe to the whole *Christian World*, before my *Lord* of *Bangor* invented it as an *Engine* to promote an *impracticable Project*) yet that such *Commands* may be laid upon *them* by the *Authority* of the *Bishop* of *Bangor*, notwithstanding *Christ's sole Legislation* in *his own Kingdom*.

He endeavours indeed (p. 146) to make it appear as a *Command* of *Christ*, his Arguments are, 1. That *Christ* chose *other Methods*. The Answer is because *he* acted as *Another Person*, viz: as a *Private Man*. 2. That *Christ's Methods* are the *most proper*. The Answer is, They were most proper for *him*, who had *Spirituals* altogether at his Command, but not for the *Magistrate*, who is only armed with *Temporal Powers*. 3. That "*This* World, and "the Motives of it, are contrary, and work in a contrary Me"thod to those of *Another*, the one tending to *Truth* and *Since*"*rity*, the *other* to outward Profession." The Answer is, that *This* World has no tendency to outward Profession in any, but those *Hypocrites* who have a tendency in their own corrupt Affections to whatever is Evil; but it has a tendency also to encourage and enable Men to do their Duty towards God; otherwise, he would not have commanded us to pray for *our daily Bread*, nor have told us, Mat. 6. 33. that if we *seek first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, all other things should be added unto us*. 4. The *Bishop* adds, that "Therefore, to apply the Motives of *this* "World to that, to which Christ applied the Motives of the "*other* World only, is to act directly contrary to him." The Answer is, that it is not acting contrary to his Command, and therefore can be no *Invasion* of his *Supreme Legislation*; nor is it acting contrary to the *Interests of true Religion*, as he says. For *true Religion* is placed in the *Heart*, far above the Seat of *Magisterial Power*.

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The *Bishop* a little more plainly discovers his Meaning, p. 147. that by adding *new Sanctions* to *Christ's Laws*, his Sense is, that *Christ* forbids to use *Force* or *Flattery*, *Pleasure* or *Pain*, "as Motives to one certain Particular Way of Worship, and one certain Profession of Religion." The Answer is, that *Christ* bids his *Disciples* not to do any thing that *he* has forbidden, when commanded by the *Magistrate*; and the *Magistrate* lies under the same Obligation, not to command his *Subjects* to do any thing that *Christ* has forbidden. But it is not *Christ*, but my *Lord* of *Bangor*, acting in what he calls *Christ's Kingdom*, who forbids *him* to use *Force* or *Flattery*, as Motives to one certain Particular Way of Worship, tho' it be *that* which he esteems the *Best* in the World. For certainly the *Magistrate* lies under the same Obligation with a Private Man, to chuse the *Best Communion* he can for himself; and under the same Obligation to encourage *that Communion* with the *Powers* God has given him, and from which *Christ* has exempted not one of *his Subjects*. The *Bishop* indeed would exempt them all, by that one Text of St. *Paul*, *What hast thou to do to judge the Servant of another Master?* But as this is spoken only of *Private Judgment*, condemned before by our Saviour, *Judge not that ye be not judged*; and St. *Paul* therein condemns only those *Private Men*, who spoke ill of a *weak Brother*, who thought it his Duty to feed only on *Herbs*, in Obedience to those Laws of Temperance and Sobriety, which *Christ* gave his *Disciples*, whereas *Christ* had left him the free Choice of his *Diet*; It is to be hoped the *Legislature* will not be frightned, from asserting *their own Just Rights*, against the *Authority* of a *Single Bishop*, I leave it to their Consideration, how far the *Bishop's* Tenents do affect the *Act* of *Uniformity*, and the *Test Act*, or any other *they* may make, which may in the *Bishop's* Sense, add *new Sanctions* to the *Laws* of the *Christian Religion*. They have *Power* to vindicate *themselves* without my *Assistance*. But if *they* are willing to give away their *Power* to the *Bishop* of *Bangor*, as the *Kings* of the *Earth* once gave *theirs* to the *Bishop* of *Rome*, and make *him in all Causes, and over all Persons as well Ecclesiastical as Civil, in these his Majesties Realms and Dominions, Supreme Moderator and Governor*, it is in vain for a *Private Person* to oppose it. And therefore I shall say no more upon that Subject.

FINIS.

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